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Money Isn't Everything

What William Julius Wilson and other liberals don't understand about the underclass.

by Joe Klein

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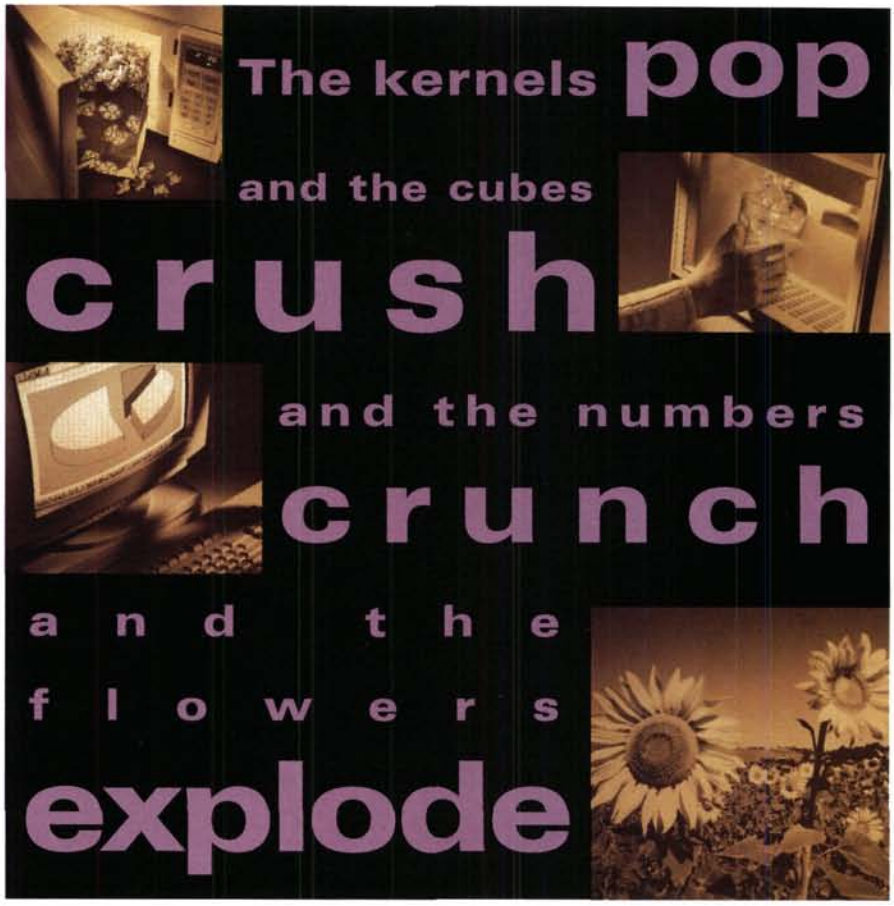

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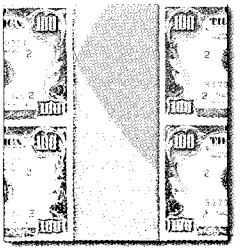

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CORRESPONDENCE

Airing differences

To the editors:

What a hoot to hear reporters crying about being "dicked" by the Dole campaign ("The Air War," Roger Simon, September 30). Perhaps we need a Boland amendment for them as well, so that no aspect of politics can be withheld from this essential yet unelected fourth branch of government.

You have to be pretty damn cognitively challenged not to acknowledge that the vast majority of our cool, pop media, to whom glibness equals credibility and uncoolness is the ultimate sin—are solidly behind Clinton. As long as he doesn't drag their credibility onto ground that is too swampy, at which time they'll turn without hesitation—in a way that would have to be fully sanctioned by their Saviour—and start flinging eggs at him to save their own skins.

The cries of being "dicked" also reveal a similarity between these reporters and their idol: the kneejerk compulsion to blame someone else. If a reporter can't get the story, whether through lack of resourcefulness, incompetence or an established reputation for unfairness, it's nobody's fault but the reporter's. But in this case it suddenly becomes the fault of the source. Wouldn't return a phone call? Even in my short career as a reporter, that was one excuse I learned to dread taking to the city desk.

Speaking of established reputations, the indignant Ceci Connelly of *The St. Petersburg Times* was the most amusing. I worked copy in the *Times* newsroom up until about three months ago, when I quit the news business altogether. The climate there was hard to ignore. A city editor's computer bore a bumpersticker that trumpeted to the room, "LOBOTOMIES FOR REPUBLICANS—IT'S THE LAW." The wire desk staff, not to be outdone, had posted proofs of AP photos of various conservative figures along one wall of their cubicle with condoms scrawled over all their heads in black pen. Staffers were observed gathered around the AP Leaf monitor, laughing and "eeewwwww"ing over a photo of Bob Dole in a bathing suit that showed his paunch and his deformed arm. This from a paper that claims diversity as the ultimate moral good. So long as one's diversity doesn't actually extend into the thinking part of one's brain.

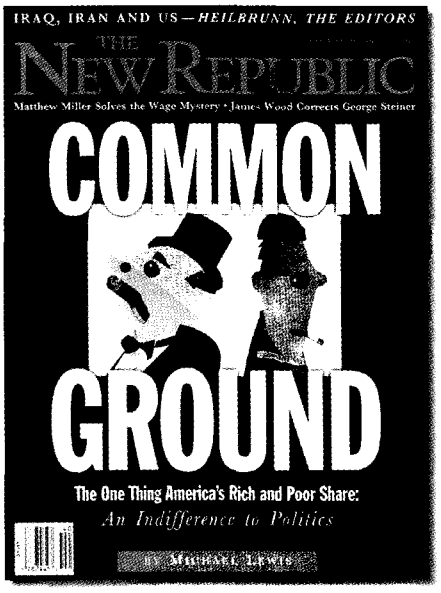
If winning an election means kowtowing to lazy, unaccountable hypocrites who think there is no truth left for them to learn, then 'tis nobler to lose. As for feeling "dicked," well ... join the news-reading public.

ALEC ROONEY
St. Petersburg, Florida

False choice

To the editors:

John B. Judis's excellent analysis of the several proposals for "school choice" ("Bad Choice?" September 30) does not discuss the constitutional objections to governmental funding of vouchers for payment of tuition at religious schools. In 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court held (in *School District of Grand Rapids* v. *Ball*) that a school district's shared time and community education programs, which


IRAQ, IRAN AND US—HEILBRUNN, THE EDITORS
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Matthew Miller Solves the Wage Mystery • James Wood Corrects George Steiner
COMMON GROUND
The One Thing America's Rich and Poor Share:
An Indifference to Politics
MICHAEL LEWIS

provided classes to nonpublic school students at public expense in classrooms located in and leased from parochial schools, had the "primary or principal" effect of advancing religion and therefore violated the First Amendment's prohibition of the establishment of religion. Justice William J. Brennan reasoned:

"The challenged programs have the effect of promoting religion in three ways. The state-paid teachers, influenced by the pervasively sectarian nature of the religious schools in which they work, may subtly or overtly indoctrinate the students in particular religious tenets at public expense. The symbolic union of church and state inherent in the provision of secular, state-provided public instruction in the religious school buildings threatens to convey a message of state support for religion to students and to the general public. Finally the programs in effect subsidize the religious functions of the parochial schools by taking over a substantial portion of their responsibility for teaching secular subjects."

All three of these unconstitutional effects would result from the proposals of Bob Dole and others for publicly financed religious school vouchers.

PETER MILLER
New York, New York

To the editors:

It's amazing how many things John B. Judis could get wrong in such a short critique of the Milwaukee school choice program.

The private schools are not "undersubscribed": there are long waiting lists, which induced the legislature last year to raise the enrollment cap from 1,500 to 15,000 and to include religious schools among the options. Private schools have a much lower dropout rate than the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS).

The state's official researcher, John Witte (who refused to release his data for five years), compared choice students to a subset of MPS students. The Harvard Kennedy School's Paul Peterson compared choice students with kids who applied but didn't get randomly selected—the best possible comparison. Peterson's findings—that over four years the program has narrowed the minority to nonminority test-score gap by between one-third and one-half—confirm observations of parents and teachers in the program.

The program has taken from MPS some of its most difficult to educate students, alleviated overcrowding and increased per-pupil spending. Most importantly, as both the current and former MPS superintendents testified at a recent hearing, it has prompted long-overdue public school reforms.

THE NEW REPUBLIC should join real "New Democrats" like Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke and Puerto Rico Governor Pedro Rossello in supporting the most promising education reform for kids who desperately need it.

CLINT BOLICK
Washington, D.C.

John B. Judis replies:

Of 60,000 students eligible for the Milwaukee program, from 0.9 to 1.7 percent applied annually during the first four years. The study Bolick cites (by researchers from the Kennedy School and Houston University) compared the students who remained in private schools through the third and fourth year to students who were rejected by the choice program, remained in the public schools and were required to take the comparative tests as part of a requirement for receiving free lunches. As Witte pointed out, these students tend to be poorer

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and come from less-educated families than those who remained in private schools—exactly those variables that researchers find closely correlated with lower achievement. Even so, the Houston-Harvard results don't show statistically significant improvements over the four years, except in math from the third to the fourth year. But, again, I did not argue against Milwaukee or Cleveland undertaking these programs. I argued that the results were ambiguous. And what I argued strongly against was a Dole-style national voucher program.

Original intent

To the editors:

I suppose that it's too late to put the genie back in the bottle, but would it be possible to return the phrase "beg the question" to its original meaning of presume what one is trying to prove, e.g., "Democracy is the greatest form of government because rule by the majority works best"? Matthew Miller ("Wage War," September 30) uses it in the now current sense of "leads to the question...." This may make the writer seem erudite, but to me it has the opposite effect—similar to using fortuitous for fortunate or bemused for amused.

CHARLES A. AMENTA III
Flossmoor, Illinois

Conventions and conventions

To the editors:

Jean Bethke Elshtain's column ("Sense and Sensibility," September 30) distinguishing between pity and compassion helped me solve a puzzle stemming from the party conventions. I was puzzled that after the conventions, which were so awash in family values rhetoric and pity for the unfortunate, no elected official took a single step toward an action which would have benefited children and their families, namely moving toward ratification of the 1989 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The answer to my puzzlement, thanks to Elshtain's analysis, is that the conventions offered merely gooey pity, not clear-eyed compassion which would have meant easing the lot of so many American children through implementation of the U.N. Convention as a matter of justice. Readers, like many of the dozens of people I spoke with at Stand For Children on June 1, may well be ignorant of this document, which establishes minimum standards for protection of children in health, education, housing, nutrition, language, minority rights and many other areas.

Though President Clinton directed U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright to sign the Convention in June 1995, he has not formally transmitted it to the Senate. In a letter to me he claimed this is because he is still mulling over appropriate reservations; I hope it's not because he feels that simply by signing the Convention he has exhausted its pity potential. To be fair, he may feel that transmitting the Convention on the Rights of the Child right now would be a waste of time, in view of the hostile reception it would receive from many senators. Jesse Helms, whose Foreign Relations Committee would have to refer the Convention to the full Senate or reject it, has introduced a resolution condemning the Convention for "undermining parental authority" and pledging to keep it from being ratified.

With the passage of the welfare "reform" bill threatening to boot many poor families off welfare, huge numbers of children will be even more at risk. President Clinton, Senator Helms and all the members of the Foreign Relations Committee need to hear a call, not for a safe, generic pity for victims of injustice, but for compassion rooted in justice which would ensure to all American children the protection of rights that the United Nations would guarantee to all children of the world.

KENNETH J. RUMMENIE
Buffalo, New York

A Zwinglian responds

To the editors:

Allow a lapsed Zwinglian to comment on one real presence in James Wood's "Real Absences" (September 30) about George Steiner's *No Passion Spent*. I couldn't help laughing at the passage on the "consumer's indefinite article." It was the happy laughter of recognition. Wood is witty about the consumerist sound of "a Mozart, a Gauss or a Galileo who, in some degrees compensate for man."

But these indefinite articles portend the linguistic substratum of German. It is German writers—not the best—who will try to sound profound and portentous by referring to "a Mozart" meaning not "a slice of" but "the likes of" where there are no "likes," and all that is intended is a hint that "we recognize greatness when we see it." My hilarity was increased by the recollection of George Steiner's passionate pronouncements against the German language in the 1960s.

BEATE RUHM VON OPPEN
Annapolis, Maryland

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J.J. GOLDBERG

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*Mike Wallace, *CBS News*

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FROM WASHINGTON

Bare minimum

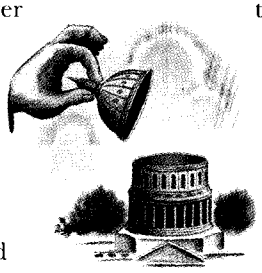
"This is a cause for celebration for all Americans of all parties, all walks of life, all faiths. By coming together across lines that have too often divided us and finding common ground, we have made this a real season of achievement for the people of America," Bill Clinton said, as he signed the minimum wage bill on August 20. The close of the 104th Congress occasioned many such moments of self-congratulation, as Congress passed a flurry of legislation with bipartisan support. Even liberals were impressed. But beneath the carapace of constructive reform lies a legislative record filled with outrages. And the minimum wage bill, supposedly the great progressive achievement of this year, is no exception. It may actually be the best example of all.

The bill that raised the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 an hour is called the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996. It contains several measures that Republicans sought for their allies in the National Federation of Independent Business and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Most of these—like an increase in the amount the self-employed can deduct for health insurance—were either innocuous or commendable. But the bill also includes at least ten other significant provisions aimed at neither small business owners nor their employees. And they more than negate whatever good the bill may do. Here are the lowlights:

Leveraged buyouts: In a moment of temporary sanity, Congress put into the 1986 tax reform bill a measure preventing firms that engage in leveraged buyouts (LBOs) from claiming a tax deduction for the exorbitant fees they pay investment banks and advisers. The measure removed the incentive for such buyouts, which, during their height in the 1980s, had distorted investment priorities, bankrupted firms and led to worker lay-offs. This year's minimum wage bill once again makes these fees deductible and does so retroactively, producing a billion-dollar windfall for companies that contested the 1986 ruling.

And Congress didn't stop there. In the past, one kind of LBO was generally worthwhile—employee buyouts of companies that would otherwise have closed. Congress even provided a special incentive for these buyouts by allowing banks to exclude half the interest payments they receive on loans for employee buyouts. But Congress stuck into the minimum wage bill a provision eliminating that incentive. In short, the bill rewards managers that engage in high-stakes LBOs intended merely to enrich themselves and their investment advisers but penalizes employees trying to save their own ailing companies.

Multinational corporations: During the cold war, Congress, eager to prop up our allies' economies in Europe and Asia, provided incentives for American firms to invest overseas. American multinationals didn't have to pay U.S. taxes on their foreign income unless or until they repatriated it, and they could deduct whatever payments they had already made to foreign governments. By the cold war's end, these incentives had outlived their usefulness. In the 1992 campaign, candidate Clinton promised to eliminate them, but in 1993 his administration predictably backed down, merely requiring overseas firms to reinvest their unrepatriated profits in foreign plants and equipment rather than banking them. This year's Congress, in a minimum wage bill supposedly aimed at helping low-income workers, rescinded even that caveat. So multinationals will have as much incentive as ever to move their jobs overseas to avoid higher American taxes, and Treasury will continue to lose out on almost $2 billion annually in revenue.



Pensions: Most workers and companies assume the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) protects their pensions from insurance company abuse and incompetence. Under ERISA, when a business gives insurance companies its pension funds to manage and invest, the companies must do so "solely in the interest of workers and retirees." If the insurance companies take enormous fees for themselves or invest the funds in risky ventures, they can be sued. But for two decades insurance companies have tried to convince the courts that they shouldn't be subject to ERISA. In 1993 the Supreme Court ruled clearly in *John Hancock* v. *Harris Trust* that they were. The 104th Congress came to the rescue. In the minimum wage bill, Senate Republican and Democratic leaders inserted a last-minute rider effectively reversing the Supreme Court decision and making insurance companies subject to a lesser standard of conduct. The measure, dubbed the ERISA Clarification Act, was even applied retroactively to what companies did prior to this year.

There's more. The minimum wage bill eliminated a requirement that companies extend to lower-wage employees the same pension benefits they grant higher-paid workers; and it ended a surtax on one-year pension withdrawals over $150,000, a boon to the ultra-rich. The bill removed a surtax on luxury car purchases and on diesel fuel for yachts. And it allowed newspaper publishers to treat their distributors and carriers as independent carriers rather than employees, so they won't have to pay their Social Security and unemployment compensation.

As it often does, Congress used a bill touted as poor relief as cover for its pandering to some of the most powerful lobbies in Washington—investment banks, multinationals like Microsoft and Johnson & Johnson, life insurance firms and newspaper publishers. Republicans took the lead. Oklahoma Senator Don Nickles pressed for the change in LBO tax laws. House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer, as always, championed tax breaks for the wealthy. But all these measures enjoyed bipartisan support. Life insurance companies got both Kansas Senator Nancy Kassebaum and Connecticut Senator Chris Dodd to press their case. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich wrote a letter endorsing the changes in ERISA. And, of the sixteen members of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, only two, Paul Simon and Paul Wellstone, dissented. (By the way, Simon is retiring, and Wellstone may well lose his re-election bid, see "The Refuge," page 12.)

What about the 104th Congress's other great achievements? Senators Kassebaum and Kennedy claimed their health care reform bill requires insurers to cover people with pre-existing conditions, and both President Clinton and Bob Dole have crowed about it on the stump. But the bill doesn't limit what the insurers charge and allows them to shunt these undesirables off to Medicaid-like high-risk pools (see "Pool Sharks," TNR, April 29, 1996). Welfare reform expands the supply of low-wage job applicants without expanding the supply of jobs, holding down the wages that the minimum wage bill was supposed to raise. A "cause for celebration for all Americans"? I don't think so.

JOHN B. JUDIS

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 28, 1996

CUT BAIT

Bob Dole unveiled his economic plan thirteen weeks before the election. Republicans hoped, and Democrats feared, that the huge tax cuts would conjure up the wizardry of Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign, which came to life with the promise of tax cuts. Ten of those weeks have now passed, and the frog is still a frog. Over 60 percent of Americans do not believe Dole will cut their taxes; those who do are outnumbered by skeptics who think Dole will *raise* their taxes. Dole has now been reduced to re-running George Bush's 1988 campaign, chanting the feeble insult "liberal" over and over at a candidate who has spent his career fortifying himself against it.

To save Dole and ourselves from the doldrums, we humbly suggest a new approach: renounce the tax cut. We wouldn't suggest it if we didn't believe Dole felt the same way we do, at the bottom of his heart. All the evidence suggests the economic plan is a desperate, cynical attempt to buy votes rather than a genuine conversion to supply-side economics. Dole, after all, has exerted precious political capital over the years straightening up the mess left by Ronald Reagan's tax cuts. He has until recently shown nothing but contempt for supply-side theory, and no evidence has since arisen to salvage its reputation.

Dole's timing makes us especially suspicious. He could have proposed a tax cut during the Republican primary, when he had no answer to Steve Forbes's flat tax and his nomination seemed in danger. He demurred. Only in August, after party strategists spent weeks hounding him with a false nostrum—that waving the talisman of tax cuts was his only chance to narrow President Clinton's massive lead—did Dole relent. But the contrast between believers and cynics remains all too apparent. When confronted with Clinton's objection that the plan will "blow a hole in the deficit," Jack Kemp falls under the trance of voodoo passion: "We're going to cut the capital-gain tax unapologetically and unashamedly by 50 percent," he crowed on "Meet the Press," "and that alone will bring far more revenue into the government." Dole merely smirks, "What it's really going to do is blow a hole in his lead."

But it hasn't. Every remotely objective analysis has exposed Dole's plan as a series of vague, hopelessly optimistic and contradictory assumptions piled on top of each other like a house of cards. You don't have to be a sniveling liberal to doubt that Dole could cut more money from the Commerce Department's budget than it actually spends or to question the wisdom of paying for permanent tax increases with onetime sales of government assets. Even his economic apologists can only come up with shallow soundbites in its defense. And this time, nobody's buying the chicanery.

So why bother? Dole has little to lose. Even more than in August, Dole needs a headline-grabbing shakeup. If he stands up and confesses that his tax cut was a mistake, a capitulation to short-term political pressure at a weak moment, he would earn a second look from voters, who appreciate politicians willing to forthrightly admit mistakes. What could Clinton attack him for? Flip-flopping?

The risks are this: his supply-side supporters would be horrified. But they have caused him nothing but grief. In 1985 Dole engineered a painful deficit reduction bill in the Senate, with Pete Wilson, still attached to a hospital I.V., casting the dramatic final vote. Kemp promptly subverted him in the House. This summer they battered him relentlessly until he took up their banner. And as his campaign stagnates they are already marking their distance, jockeying to lay the blame for Dole's anticipated failure on his personality rather than the ideas he has espoused. The supply-siders haven't hesitated to place their cause above his. He owes them nothing.

In any case, Dole's putative supply-side conversion not only aids his enemies, it isolates his friends. What hope remains for conservative deficit hawks if their standard-bearer can be turned? When Dole began his political career, fiscal conservatism was the exclusive province of the GOP. In 1963 he voted against President Kennedy's proposed tax cuts. Even as the Democrats slowly adopt his old position, Dole is presiding over his party's retreat from budgetary prudence.

When Dole announced his tax plan it was an affront. Now it's a tragedy: he sold his soul to win the presidency, and is going to end up with neither. He appears to have only a few weeks remaining to salvage history's verdict. Repent, Senator, for the end is nigh. •

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NOTEBOOK

THE REAL DAVID BROCK: With the publication of *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham*, his ho-hum account of the First Lady's life, right-wing print assassin David Brock has been born again. The man who once accused Hillary of sending state troopers to fetch sanitary napkins is now a paragon of even-handedness. Brock, the book's press release puffs, "takes issue with what he calls unfair press criticism of Mrs. Clinton." Of course Brock isn't going to let the First Lady off the hook entirely. She is, he's discovered, a communist. The evidence? In 1969 Hillary read a Methodist-sponsored magazine that published articles on commune life, lesbianism and "WITCH Power." And as a law student in 1971 she interned for a man who'd been placed on a list of America's most "dangerously subversive" lawyers. Where did Brock find this tidbit? That indispensable source for any serious journalist, the House Un-American Affairs Committee.

SHELF LIFE: We are happy to announce the publication of these recent books by regular contributors to this magazine and friends of the house: *Augustine & the Limits of Politics* (University of Notre Dame Press) by Jean Bethke Elshtain; *Marginalized in the Middle* (University of Chicago Press) by Alan Wolfe; *Legal Reasoning & Political Conflict* (Oxford University Press) by Cass R. Sunstein; *Stravinsky and The Russian Traditions* (University of California Press) by Richard Taruskin; and *Divided They Fell: The Demise of the Democratic Party, 1964-1996* by Ronald Radosh. The latter was cited approvingly last week by Bob Dole. At last we agree with him about something.

MAP NOTES: The electoral map hasn't gotten any friendlier to Bob Dole since our last tally. He's still got less than half the electoral votes he needs to win. It's not that Dole's in free fall; the count seems to be holding steady (before the debates, that is). In fact, in a sign that parts of the South may finally be ready to end their campaign-long flirtation with the charmer from Arkansas, two states have moved from "Clinton ahead" to even, giving Bob Dole a good shot at seventeen electoral votes he has to have. Kentucky is one, though Dole still isn't getting as much traction from his defense of smoking as one might expect in this tobacco-growing state. The other is Louisiana, part of Clinton's 1992 base, but a state that's been veering sharply right and may be about to elect its first Republican senator this century. Dole may also be nailing down the GOP mother lode in the mountain West, moving from "ahead" to "strong" in Wyoming (though he's still in trouble in must-wins Montana, Nevada and Arizona). Beyond this, though, there's the really bad news for Dole: Clinton still owns California and the industrial Midwest. And, since our last map, Iowa's folksy liberals and the suburban soccer moms of Connecticut have pretty much given Bob Dole their last look. Both have moved from "Clinton ahead" to "Clinton strong" (a *Hartford Courant* poll found Dole's unfavorable rating among that state's women at an incredible 48 percent). The president is now so confident in New England that he campaigned recently in Maine and New Hampshire, two generally GOP-friendly states where Clinton's very presence at this late date conjures the word landslide. •

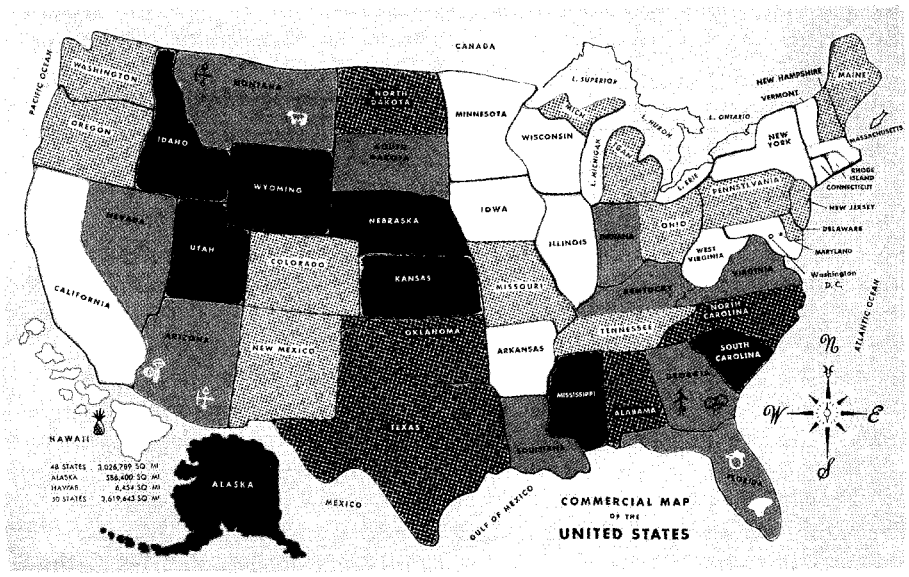
Weekly Electoral Vote Estimate

As of 10/4/96

by Hal Bruno, ABC News Political Director

(538 Total Votes, 270 Required for Election)

Clinton=333 Even=98 Dole=107



Clinton Strong | Close/Even | Dole Strong

Clinton Ahead | Dole Ahead

Weekly estimates are not scientific, but the result of a compilation of interviews and local polling.

Map modified for TNR by Jane Holloway

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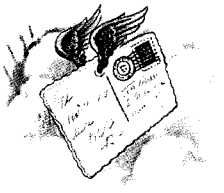
MOSCOW POSTCARD

HEART OF DARKNESS

By Masha Gessen

It is a trivial truth that, as long as anyone can remember, Kremlin watchers have made their living off two questions: How ill is the current Kremlin resident, and Who is really running the country? Rulers, Russian and Soviet alike, have generally died in office. Their deaths, often the only impetus for major government policy change, have always been political events.

By the time most of the Kremlin's modern occupants got there, they could hardly walk unaided. The average life expectancy for a Russian man is 58. Boris Yeltsin is 65, and so, though Russians never tire of discussing the president's appearance, the signs of his illness are familiar and expected. A hard-working, hard-drinking Russian man his age looks like a (barely) walking corpse, and that is that.



For Yeltsin, though, this Russian resignation to the facts of life is no longer of much political use. So for the past few months, as it has become increasingly difficult to hide his condition, Kremlin spin doctors have labored to break the usual formula by making the ordinary political fact of the president's illness into an extraordinary personal tragedy. Only a new sort of public understanding could stave off the traditional vulture-like power grabs by political rivals or the new danger of a decline in investor confidence.

On September 5 Yeltsin took the unprecedented step of announcing he was ill and preparing for surgery. The official public-relations machine launched into action, delivering two messages: that the president's medical condition was a discrete one and that, consequently, a single heart operation would return him to health. In a society that, unlike the U.S., accepts death as random, commonplace and non-negotiable, the politicos have tried to mobilize a skeptical citizenry behind the simple idea that death can be prevented.

Only once in the last month have the official spokesmen and the media allowed any distraction from Yeltsin's vital muscle. In late September, for the first time in recent years, the Kremlin declared a national day of mourning after a freight train in southern Russia crashed into a school bus carrying twenty-one children. For nearly a week, television broadcasts showed close-ups of parents assembling the limp parts of their children; two days after the accident, flags flew at half-mast, and the memorial service featured a panoply of federal-level dignitaries, including Yeltsin's daughter, who delivered her father's condolences. The spin echoed the message of the First Illness: in a country whose population has declined for five consecutive years, where more than 2 million die per year (one-sixth of them the victims of accidents or murder) and where a month earlier uncounted thousands died in yet another escalation of the two-year-old war in Chechnya, death, carnage and sudden disaster were now being portrayed as extraordinary events.

For the first weeks after Yeltsin's impending surgery was announced, the Russian press treated the president with unprecedented compassion. It was a victory for the Kremlin media team. Journalists suspended criticism of the president in favor of get-well wishes and praise for his courage. Media reports, accompanied by anatomical diagrams, focused on the president's heart as the sole residence of his ailment and on the operation as its final resolution. Even Yeltsin's political rivals accepted this assumption, calling for laws requiring medical exams for public officials and demanding a clarification of the mechanism by which the president would delegate power during his operation—as though it were only on that extraordinary day that he was likely to die.

But, as the rare close-up shots of Yeltsin receded into memory, it became clear that the only extraordinary, localized and finite event was the sudden flash of glasnost in the Kremlin. Newly announced disclosure policies notwithstanding, the spin doctors did not retract their previous false denials that Yeltsin suffered a heart attack near the second round of the presidential election in July. Nor did the Kremlin press service reveal much about the president's current condition. A month after Boris Yeltsin broke with the silent tradition, the relationship between the Kremlin and those who watch it has returned to normal. The once frenzied talk of a medical-disclosure bill has subsided, for the obvious reason that no Russian man over 40—no major Russian politician, that is—has a hope in hell of scoring an honestly clean bill of health. Journalists are back to guessing and speculating: Is Yeltsin secretly being readied for a heart transplant? Which of his other organs are malfunctioning, and how badly? How many heart attacks has he had, and when?

The adjustment in the country's concept of death and disaster proved short-lived, too; when on October 3 a helicopter carrying thirty people crashed, it scarcely warranted mention on the evening newscasts and got no top-level official reaction. The farcical public end to the Russian president's personal tragedy now lies in plain view. In a couple of months the Kremlin press service will announce the successful completion of a heart operation on Boris Yeltsin. The country, led by the Kremlin-watching media, will become convinced that in the end the doctors decided not to operate but to say they did. Which will raise two questions: How sick is Yeltsin, and Who is really running the country?

MASHA GESSEN is author of *Dead Again: The Russian Intelligentsia After Communism*, to be published by Verso next spring.

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An end to two-party monopoly?

HOT FUSION

By Jason Gray Zengerle

For third parties, this should be the season of discontent. Though voters don't seem especially enamored of the major-party candidates for president, they aren't exactly rushing into the arms of the Green Party's Ralph Nader or the Libertarian Party's Harry Browne, either. Even Ross Perot, whose 19 percent showing in 1992 should have made him the most credible third-party candidate since Teddy Roosevelt, seems to have lost much of his appeal. Yet this fall may turn out to be the most important moment for third parties in recent memory. In November, while its better-known third-party brethren are getting trounced at the polls, the liberal New Party will be preparing for its December date before the U.S. Supreme Court. If it wins its case, third parties will be playing by new and more favorable rules than they ever have before.

At issue in the case are state statutes that prevent a candidate from running on more than one party ticket. On the books in forty states and the District of Columbia only nine months ago, but now found in seven fewer jurisdictions thanks to New Party court challenges, such bans prohibit the appearance of a candidate on more than one party line on the ballot. That prohibition might sound inoffensive enough, but for third parties it's a huge impediment, one that relegates them to the fringes and deprives them of the leverage they could gain by offering or withholding a second ballot line to a major-party candidate. Fusion bans, as they're known, afflict third parties with the "wasted-vote syndrome"—even if you love their platform, you're reluctant to throw your vote away on candidates with no serious chance of winning. But, when fusion is permitted, minor parties can form electoral coalitions with other parties that are running more viable candidates, and an otherwise futile third-party vote can become a meaningful one. By fostering more competition, participation and representation in American politics, fusion is a simple way to invigorate the electoral system.

In most of the world's democracies—where proportional representation prevails—third, fourth and even fifth parties can easily become political forces, since parties are awarded a percentage of seats in their legislatures roughly proportionate to their share of the popular vote. But in America's winner-take-all system, third, or minority, parties are by definition largely precluded from any effective role in the political process. Fusion, however, is a peculiarly American version of proportional representation, in that it works within a winner-take-all system to encourage the same kind of coalition building you get in a proportional system.

Nineteenth-century American politics were characterized by vital third parties and, not coincidentally, by the nationwide use of fusion. Fusion allowed third parties like the Grangers, the Greenbackers, the Independents and the Populists to cross-nominate major-party candidates and to wield real political clout. In 1892, the fusion between the Democratic Party and the populist "People's Party" carried Grover Cleveland to the White House. But, ironically, such success helped to doom the practice: embittered Progressives and Republicans in many state legislatures, fearful of increased minority representation, started passing anti-fusion statutes and the third-party force began to fade.

In states where fusion is still legal, however, third parties have maintained their vigor. In New York, for example, former New York City Mayors Fiorello LaGuardia and John Lindsay ran successfully on fusion tickets, and current mayor Rudy Giuliani owes his office to the practice. In his 1993 campaign for mayor, Giuliani ran as both the Republican and the Liberal Party nominee, and it was the 62,469 votes he received on the Liberal Party line that gave him his 53,340 vote edge over Democrat David Dinkins. Fusion has so strengthened third parties in New York that on occasion they have been able to win major elections without the help of an alliance with a major party. In 1965, for example, Lindsay was elected mayor as a Republican-Liberal fusion candidate, but, when he lost the Republican mayoral primary in 1969, he was able to run and win re-election solely as the Liberal Party's nominee.

Of all the major and minor American parties, though, it is the four-year-old New Party—a mélange of labor activists, environmentalists, community organizers and academics all seeking a liberal alternative to the Democratic Party—that best recognizes fusion's potential. With 7,500 dues-paying members (compared to 1 million Democratic and 800,000 Republican contributors) and chapters in eleven states, the New Party has not yet reached its goal of being a national party. But if it is successful in its legal strategy to repeal fusion bans, it will have made perhaps the most significant impact on the American political system of any third party in the twentieth century.

Sarah Siskind and New Party Chair Joel Rogers, a husband-and-wife legal duo from Madison, Wisconsin, began their crusade against anti-fusion statutes in 1990, when they filed a federal suit challenging Wisconsin's ban on multiple-party nominations. In 1991 the suit was tossed out by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, but Siskind and Rogers persevered, filing a suit in 1994 on behalf of the New Party that challenged Minnesota's anti-fusion law. This past January, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals found in favor of the New Party, concluding that anti-fusion statutes infringed upon First Amendment rights to political association. "A party has a First Amendment right to select and place on the bal-

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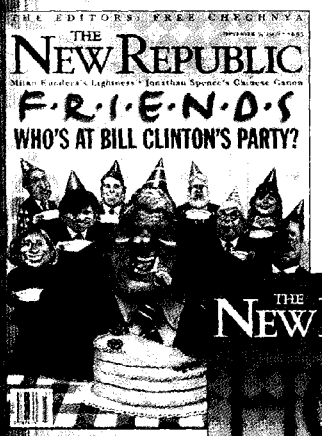

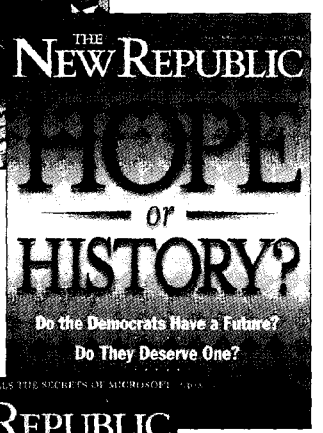

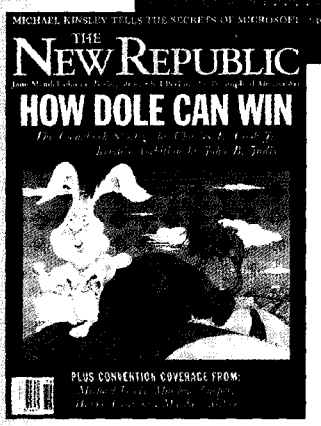

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lot the person it wants to be its standard-bearer," Siskind explains. "It's as simple as that."

Faced with a split between the 7th and 8th Circuits, the Supreme Court accepted Minnesota's petition and agreed to hear arguments on fusion this fall. Minnesota will contend that anti-fusion laws are justified by the state's compelling interest in minimizing voter confusion and preventing the splintering of major political parties. The New Party's case, based as before on First Amendment claims, will be argued by Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe, whose success in swaying the swing vote in a slew of major cases before the Court has earned him the nickname "the tenth justice." By the spring of 1997, fusion bans may be a thing of the past.

And that could lead to a profound change in the nature of American elections. Fusion could produce a protest vote that actually counts. It could allow voters to express support for particular aspects of a candidate's program while repudiating others: a vote for Clinton on a hypothetical New Party line, for example, could represent a thumbs-down on welfare reform legislation and an endorsement of his pledge to fix it.

Most importantly, though, the repeal of fusion bans could make America's winner-take-all system dramatically more hospitable to third parties. The Reform Party (if it is indeed an actual party, as it claims, and not a cult of personality) would likely be the short-term beneficiary, since it is now the highest-profile and best-financed of the third parties. In the long term, however, it is the New Party that hopes to gain the most from a repeal of fusion bans. Its electoral strategy keeps it relentlessly focused on the unglamorous task of building the party from the bottom up, rather than squandering valuable resources on quadrennial presidential campaigns. With that strategy in mind, the New Party has wisely refused to enter races it cannot win. Instead, since its founding in 1992, the party has run its own "credible" candidates in 122 municipal elections and won eighty-three of them, picking up about a million votes along the way. Its involvement in statewide and national contests is limited to only a few races where it has pursued fusion with a major-party candidate. "The American democratic system is very open," says New Party Executive Director Dan Cantor. "It's very easy to get on the ballot, but it's hard to make that place on the ballot meaningful.... We're taking it slow, building power city by city, county by county, so that when the familiar structure of American politics is altered by a change in election laws, we'll have the kind of base of support that will allow us to alter the content as well. We're basically paving the road as we travel it."

But even if they pave it for others, the New Party figures, it will have made its mark. "If nothing else," says party chair Rogers, "this could be our contribution to American democracy."

JASON GRAY ZENGERLE is an assistant editor at *The American Prospect.*

RACE FOR THE SENATE: MINNESOTA

THE REFUGE

By Tom Hamburger and Eric Black

You'd think if there were anywhere in the country where the "L" word wouldn't sting, it would be Minnesota, the congenitally nice home state of Garrison Keillor, Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale. In this year's Senate race, Republican candidate Rudy Boschwitz has tried to give the epithet some sting with the adverb "embarrassingly." But his opponent, incumbent Senator Paul Wellstone, still accepts the label without embarrassment. "Based on the Minnesota tradition of believing there is a role for the public sector to make sure that higher education is affordable," he says, going on to cite his support for public schools, Social Security and Medicare, environmental protection and jobs at decent wages. "Absolutely," he says. "Absolutely."

But it's not clear how much of that Minnesota tradition is still alive these days. In 1994, Minnesotans elected junior Senator Rod Grams, a staunch conservative, over a textbook liberal Democrat. Only 15 percent of Minnesotans now describe themselves as liberal, compared with 30 percent who call themselves conservative. And Boschwitz's attacks on Wellstone seem to be working. The Minnesota Poll, run by the state's biggest newspaper and a twin cities' TV station, found that Wellstone's lead over Boschwitz shrank from 47-39 in July to 43-42 in September.

Both candidates are well-known and well-financed. And they've met before, in 1990, when Wellstone pulled off one of the upsets of the year by toppling two-term incumbent Boschwitz—a memory which lends an aura of revenge fantasy and genuine personal antipathy to the rematch.

Wellstone has spent the last six years making himself an easy target. From the minute he hit Washington in 1991, he's been a hero to the capital's left-leaning constituencies—peace, labor, environmental and government ethics. Almost before unpacking, he called a press conference at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to urge that the U.S. stay out of the Gulf war. Wellstone ended up apologizing to veterans' groups for using the memorial as a backdrop, but he didn't shut up. The day after, at a White House reception for new senators, he pestered President Bush with his anti-war views, causing the president to mutter audibly, "Who is this chickenshit?"

Wellstone has waded into campaign finance reform, ethics reform and health care, becoming the chief Senate sponsor of the single-payer plan. He has annoyed

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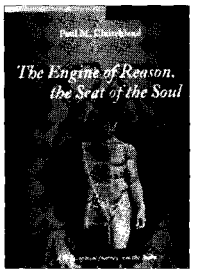

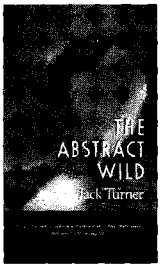

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Provocative essays take aim at conservationists and environmentalists in this rallying cry for a return to the true wild—as nature created it.
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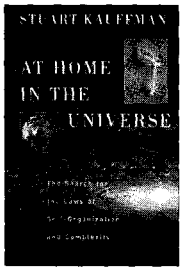

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The pioneer of the new science of complexity presents his revolutionary views on the natural order which, he argues, is driven by self-organizing principles. "An important new argument."—*Carl Sagan*
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Graceland
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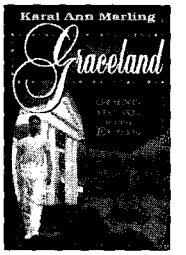

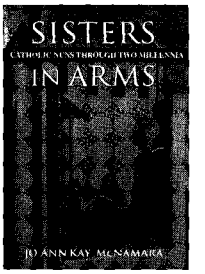

Sisters in Arms
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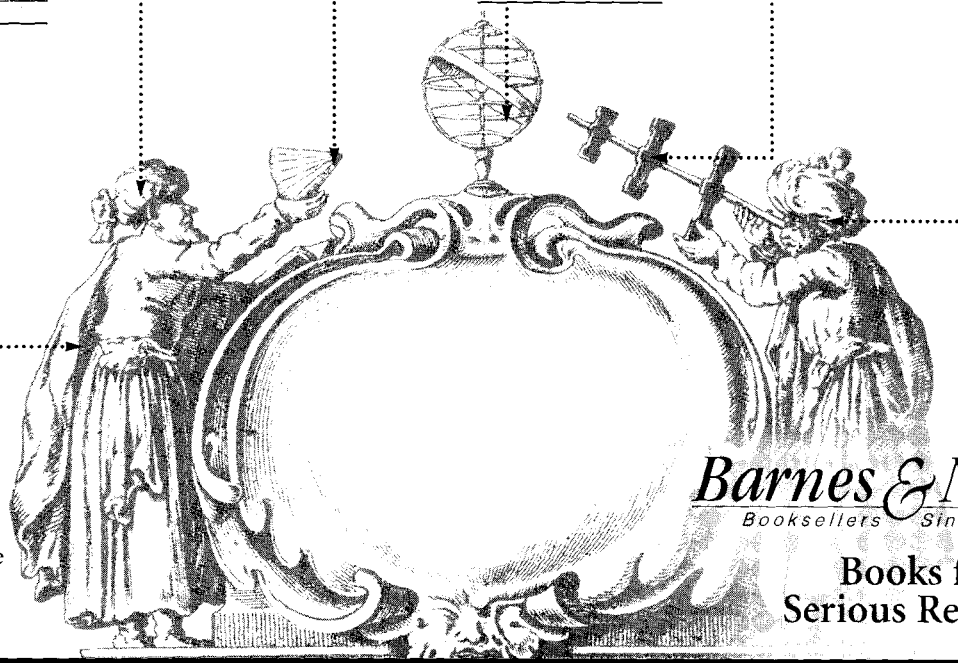

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colleagues by forcing roll call votes on topics they'd rather not address on the record, such as congressional pay and benefits.

Ask Washington liberals about Wellstone and they gush: "He is a profile in courage," said Robert Greenstein of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, after Wellstone led the charge against the welfare bill and became the only senator up for re-election to vote no when it finally passed. Senator Paul Simon called reporters to tell them of his admiration for "Wellstone's exemplary courage." "He stood by himself, almost the sole advocate for this unpopular cause," said Ann McBride, president of Common Cause, about Wellstone's support for a ban on congressional gifts from lobbyists. "He is persistent, politically courageous to the end, without giving up after a debate or two."

But back in Minnesota Wellstone is paying the price. The Republican attack ads, paid for by the party's National Senatorial Committee (NRSC), which Boschwitz once chaired, were first unleashed in late 1995. After a string of standard "big-spending liberal" attacks, the ads got much tougher this summer. One condemned Wellstone's "liberal record" on crime and flashed pictures of a gang member and a bloodied stabbing victim. The NRSC did the dirty work, leaving Boschwitz to run more positive ads. By mid-September, the committee had dumped an estimated $1.3 million into the cause. "We've had Paul Wellstone in our cross hairs since Election Day 1990," says Gordon Hensley, communications director of the NRSC.

While Wellstone complains about the campaign finance system, Boschwitz is one of few politicians who has defended fund-raising as a good way for candidates to connect with their community. As chair of the NRSC in the 1980s, Boschwitz developed a reputation as a master fund-raiser, known for his ability to convince wealthy Jews to donate to Republicans. He emigrated from Germany as a young boy when his family fled the Nazis and has been active in Jewish and pro-Israel affairs his whole life. Occasionally, Boschwitz has stepped over the line, as when in the mid-1980s he offered contributors membership in the Boschwitz "Washington Club" or "Skinny Cat" Club, depending on how much they donated. The Fat and Skinny "Cats" were given special stamps to mark their envelopes so their mail would receive priority treatment.

Boschwitz has come a long way since the 1970s, when he was a plaid-shirt-wearing pitchman for his chain of home improvement stores, called Plywood Minnesota. He moved up through the party ranks as a member of the Republican National Committee and won a Senate seat in 1978. While signing onto the Reagan revolution in Washington, Boschwitz earned a reputation as an expert in agricultural economics, advocating a gradual end to farm price supports. He kept up his homespun image with shticks like the annual booth he rented at the state fair, Rudy's Super Duper Milk House, where he greeted visitors while giving away milk in a variety of flavors—banana, amaretto, chocolate, root beer.

It's still hard to figure how in 1990 the short, histrionic lefty college professor beat the better-known, better-bankrolled, battle-tested Boschwitz. But, for starters, he ran an unusually fresh and clever campaign. Wellstone adopted populist symbols, like the green schoolbus in which he traveled the state. He enlisted an adman named Bill Hillsman, who, with little money or political experience, created a funny, quirky award-winning TV campaign. The two most famous were "Fast-paced Paul," in which Wellstone dashed around the TV screen describing his political priorities, and "Looking for Rudy," in which Wellstone searched in vain for Boschwitz so the two could debate. In truth, Boschwitz had already agreed to debate, but the takeoff on *Roger and Me* scored anyway.

Still, Boschwitz probably would have survived if not for one final blunder. Wellstone, like Boschwitz, is Jewish. But the Boschwitz campaign sent a letter to Jewish Minnesotans pointing out that, while Boschwitz was an active and observant Jew, Wellstone was married to a gentile and had not raised his children as Jews. The letter surfaced in the last days of the campaign, and caused a backlash among the mostly non-Jewish electorate. The letter was the last major news development before Election Day. Wellstone edged out Boschwitz, 50 to 48 percent. If the vote had been held a few days earlier, Boschwitz likely would have won.

The rematch, so far, has been less quirky and more ugly. As in many other congressional races, the candidates have portrayed each other as extreme and out of touch. The latest Boschwitz ads, engineered by the notorious Arthur Finkelstein, show a cartoon Wellstone raising and lowering the word "liberal" on a flash card as the narrator describes some of the senator's votes on taxes, spending and welfare. Another shows the imaginary induction of Wellstone into the "Liberal Hall of Fame," while the camera pans an audience of burned-out hippies. Boschwitz is charging in ads and debates that Wellstone voted to raise taxes forty-eight times and reminding voters that Wellstone was named the Senate's number one big spender by the National Taxpayers Union: if Wellstone has his way with the budget, there will "be nothing left for our children and grandchildren," he says.

Meanwhile, Wellstone uses Boschwitz's twelve-year Senate record to portray him as a friend to millionaires and special interests. He likes to say that these groups are already well-represented in the Senate and what Minnesota's working families need is a senator who stands up to them. In one debate, Wellstone tried some jujitsu on Boschwitz's favorite word. "If you're going to use the word embarrassing, what is embarrassing ... is that you want to devastate Medicare. It's embarrassing that you want to devastate environmental protection.... It's embarrassing that you wanted to make meat inspection voluntary. What families were you thinking about when you did that?" In a radio debate he referred to the "Gingrich-Boschwitz budget plan."

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The rematch is just as tight as the first race and hard to call. Boschwitz has a Bob Dole problem. He's 66 and looks longer in the tooth than many Minnesotans remembered. But, like Dole, he fared better than expected at the debates. And it's hard to factor the depth of Wellstone's support. He has trouble attracting moderates but inspires a loyal group of Democratic activists who will knock on doors, call everyone in Minnesota, walk through fire, whatever it takes to get their man elected. At the moment, Boschwitz has the momentum, mostly because of the double-barreled barrage of attack ads. But Wellstone is scrambling to catch up; he's hired Mandy Grunwald, star of the 1992 Clinton media team.

Whether Boschwitz wins or not, though, his success so far challenges two myths of Minnesota exceptionalism. Myth number one is that the only state in the union that Ronald Reagan never carried ought to be the one place where "liberal" might not be a political poison pill. Forget it. In that same September poll that showed Boschwitz had pulled even with Wellstone, 47 percent of Minnesotans agreed with the statement that "Paul Wellstone is so liberal that he's out of step with the state."

Myth number two is that the Minnesotan electorate is too wholesome, fair-minded and literate to succumb to a mean, deceptive and intellectually shallow ad campaign. This myth derives from Minnesota's traditional high voter turnout, its low tolerance for scandals and its Scandinavian Lutheranism. This is a state where you can actually be prosecuted for lying in campaign statements. It may still be the case, as Garrison Keillor might put it, that in Minnesota all the politics is above average. It's just that the average has sunk so low.

TOM HAMBURGER is Washington bureau chief of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. ERIC BLACK is a reporter on its national desk.

Clinton breezes through the debates.

PREP SCHOOL

By Roger Simon

The first twist of the knife came the day after Bill Clinton let Bob Dole debate himself in Hartford, Connecticut. Dole had claimed that if he "just showed up" for the debate it would be a victory, but he didn't realize that Clinton would step back and let him dominate the stage.

It worked. Unable to decide which strategy he should use—gentle humor to make himself look warm or slashing attacks on Clinton to erode the president's support—Dole used both. For every joke he also slipped in a zinger, even dragging out his dead brother Kenny, the only person in America, apparently, who Dole thinks was a bigger liar than Bill Clinton. The result was predictable: Good Bob battled Bad Bob to a draw. And Clinton floated away unscathed.

To the Clinton campaign, the debate was never really the point. A week before it began, campaign strategists were already looking beyond it. They expected Clinton would win—this is a man who began speaking to large public groups while still in high school, after all. (And to give their man an added edge, Clinton's team held out for a ninety-minute-long format, which they thought would leave Dole tired and testy.) For the Clinton staff, the debate was merely another "must-win" moment for Bob Dole in which Bob Dole could not possibly win.

Dole saw the debate as he had seen his resignation from the Senate, as a way to energize his campaign. So he let himself be shipped down to Florida for day after day of debate prep, which he hated. Dole loathes rehearsal, repetition and phoniness (all cornerstones of modern campaigning). Finally, he just refused to go on. "I'm ready. Stop. The end," he said. "It's like filling up your tank with gas. It can only hold so much." And in case his staff missed the point, he threw a few pages from his briefing book over the balcony of his condo. (Dole was also unhappy that it was not sunny. He is obsessive about his tan, which he believes summons up the image of health. Others believe it summons up the image of melanoma.)

Debate prep is one of the few times in a campaign when the curtain is pulled back and the public can glimpse the people pulling the levers behind the scenes. Staffs prepare briefing books filled with sample questions and sample answers and have the candidates memorize them so they can regurgitate the proper response when the time comes. Bill Clinton loves debate prep, as he loves all political theater. He brought virtually the entire White House senior staff to the Chautauqua Institution's wooded retreat in upstate New York, where, dressed in a sweatshirt and pleated dress pants, he briefly strolled outside among the maples for the press. He held Hillary's hand. He watched his aides play touch football. He played golf. But most of the time his staff couldn't keep him out of the rehearsal hall.

Former Senator George Mitchell of Maine played Dole while various staffers played moderator Jim Lehrer of PBS until, one by one, the staffers got tired and bored and had to be replaced. Clinton never flagged, hour after hour. He was in what one senior staffer called his "teacher mode," a mode he likes better than all others, in which he gets to lecture, to show his grasp of issues, his range of thought. Bill Clinton never tires of Bill Clinton.

The ninety-five journalists and technicians who went to Chautauqua with Clinton saw him for a few brief moments, but each was planned carefully. The White House expends enormous time and effort on visuals. And the subtext for each is the same: Bill Clinton is a

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Tunnel Vision

Just last week, a 16-year-old student in a Georgia school shot and killed a teacher who was standing at the door of his classroom. According to one newspaper account, the teacher was hit when the student drew his gun after being accidentally jostled by another student. Officials caught the kid and sent the other students home, and the next day they brought in grief counselors. Terrible though it is, the shooting of students or teachers in school is now such a common occurrence that there is a routine for attempting to deal with it. Not that any amount of counseling will bring the teacher back to life or make these students and teachers feel safe again. They now know, beyond any doubt, that they could be killed tomorrow or next week by a student who sneaked a gun into school.

In securing Juan C.'s rights, the judges disregarded a much larger issue.

This is the context that the New York State appellate court judges should have had in mind when they recently overthrew the suspension of Juan C., a former New York City high school student, for bringing a gun to school. Here's the story. In 1992, 15-year-old Juan C. was seized by a security aide as he entered William Howard Taft High School. Taft is a tough place, and at that time it had a long-standing history of violence. The aide said he saw something that looked like the handle of a gun in the pocket of the student's leather jacket. Juan C. attempted to run away, but the aide reached into his pocket and found a loaded semi-automatic weapon.

Juan C. was arrested but quickly acquitted when the judge ruled the search illegal because, he said, the aide could not have seen the outline of the gun, and the search therefore violated Juan C.'s Fourth Amendment rights. Nevertheless, the school district decided to go on with an administrative hearing, and Juan was suspended for a year. He challenged the suspension, and a lower court denied the challenge, but last month, the appellate court reversed the earlier finding. Juan C. had long since served his suspension—and, in any case, he was nowhere to be found. However, the court ordered that all mention of the disciplinary action be expunged from his record.

The general response to this decision was outrage—and rightfully so. The public is often angered and dismayed at seeing drug dealers who are caught with large quantities of drugs go free because the police have violated their Fourth Amendment rights by searching them without a search warrant or adequate evidence. But even if you are a strong supporter of the exclusionary rule, as it is called, the situation in the schools is surely different from what it is on the streets. And the standard for what constitutes a reasonable basis for searching someone in school should be far more relaxed.

Going to school is not the same as going to a public park or a shopping mall: it is not voluntary. Unless they are being home-schooled, students are legally obliged to come to school, and schools are responsible for the safety and well-being of the students while they are there. The court was very solicitous about Juan C.'s right not to be searched, but in securing his rights the judges disregarded a much larger issue—the safety of all the rest of the students.

One of the arguments for disallowing the search is to deter the security aide and others like him from doing something similar in the future. Probably it will. Security aides will be unlikely to search students if there is any possibility that the search will be illegal. And what will that mean? The number of guns will increase, making the schools still more unsafe. Some kids will bring guns because they'll know the likelihood of getting caught is slim, and other kids will bring them because they'll want to protect themselves. The guards will be deterred, all right, but what about kids like Juan C.? Talk about tunnel vision!

Year after year, public opinion polls show that parents put safety at or near the top of their list of worries about the public schools. And they are right to worry. It is up to public officials and unions and other groups that care about public education not just to roll over on this one. We must join together and explore the arguments that will lead to the overturning of this disastrous decision when the New York City school board appeals it to the state's highest court.

There's a good chance this can be done. The U.S. Supreme Court has already agreed to a relaxed application of the Fourth Amendment in schools in a couple of drug-related cases, one related to the search of student lockers and another to drug testing for students who want to play sports. If we let the case pass, the number of kids bringing guns to school will mount. It doesn't take any crystal ball to see what that will mean.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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man of light. Light is illuminating. Light is warm. Light is upbeat, happy and good. At Clinton's outdoor rallies (and he prefers outdoor rallies), the stage is wherever possible positioned so the sun faces him. And on his first day at Chautauqua, Clinton strolled down a grassy slope to quip with reporters, hands in pockets, bright sunshine making his pink face glow.

On the same day TV carried pictures of Sunny Bill, it also showed Dark Dole in his harshly lit rehearsal room in Bal Harbour, Florida, a shadow slashing his face. True, Dole's dark, bushy eyebrows and deep eye sockets create an initial disadvantage, but that does not say much about the difference between the two campaigns: the difference is that one knows how to make pretty pictures and the other does not.

The first debate was simply a means to an end for Clinton. The true prize is creating a new Democratic Party out of the shattered remains of the old Republican one. Clinton intends to chip away at whole regions of the country that used to vote Republican (the West, the South), woo demographic groups that the GOP relies upon (moderate Republican women, Cuban-Americans) and court traditionally Republican interest groups (fat cat business people). Crushing Bob Dole has never really been the point of the campaign, although it will be necessary.

So the day after the debate, Clinton boarded Marine One in Hartford and choppered over to Stamford, a wealthy Connecticut town known for its corporate headquarters fifteen miles from Manhattan. The campaign staged the event in the three-tiered theater of a performing arts center, which not only lent it a little grandeur, but also provided professional lighting. The president was surrounded by a sea of blue- and gray-suited chief executive officers assembled to pay fealty.

Paul Allaire, the CEO and chairman of Xerox, stood at the microphone and said: "We each have a different reason for supporting the president. But we share a common view that the president is good for America and good for American business."

The audience exploded into applause, accompanied by hoots and hollers. Hoots and hollers from CEOs! Bill Clinton smiled, tossed his head back and laughed. William Esrey, chairman and CEO of Sprint, marched to the lectern next. Esrey, a Republican, is also the largest employer in the state of Kansas, the state Bob Dole calls home. "As a business leader, the invitation to come here today produced a dialogue within my company which I'm sure has been echoed in board rooms across America," Esrey said with a smile.

The audience burst into laughter. Sure, plutocrats don't usually endorse Democrats, but they can read an Electoral College map. And they've decided Bill Clinton is someone with whom they can do business. While there is little doubt that more big and small business people support the Republican Party than the Democratic one, 1996 is intended to be the start of a long-term shift. "Bill Clinton is good for American business!" Esrey said. "And he's not just good for American business, he's good for America!"

Clinton walked to the lectern. "I have wondered for years why the Democratic Party should not have at least as much or more support from American business as the other party," he said. The theater rocked with applause.

"I think there is a problem developing in their ranks," White House spokesman Mike McCurry said, "about traditional sources of Republican support drying up. [It] has got to be a little dispiriting for them."

Dispiriting? Naw. Bob Dole will go to San Diego days early to prep for the next debate, which will be held October 16. And that, too, will be a turning point. That, too, will be a decisive moment. That, too, will begin his upswing, his surge. His campaign simply has to make the right moves. Like when they flew master debater George Bush down to Florida to prep Dole for the last debate.

Actually, it made sense: Richard Nixon was unavailable.

ROGER SIMON is a nationally syndicated columnist whose book on the 1996 presidential campaign will be published next year by HarperCollins.

RACE FOR THE SENATE: MASSACHUSETTS

CHEERS

By Michael Grunwald

Yellow-dog Democrats may be extinct down South, but here in Massachusetts loyal mutts still outnumber Republicans three to one. Take Madeleine and Tony Abati. The couple backed FDR in 1944, the year they got married, and they voted the party line in every election since. Not once have they pulled the lever for a Republican, not for president, not for dogcatcher. "We were born Democrats, plain and simple," Madeleine says. "I always thought we'd drop dead if we voted Republican," Tony jokes.

In this year's Senate race, though, the Abatis are switching sides. They'll vote the rest of the Democratic ticket, from President Clinton to the school board, but they'll break their 52-year-old habit for Governor William Floyd Weld. "I like him," Tony says. "He seems like such a good guy."

That yelp you just heard was from the incumbent, Senator John Forbes Kerry. For twelve years, he's voted for the environment, education and the poor, like a

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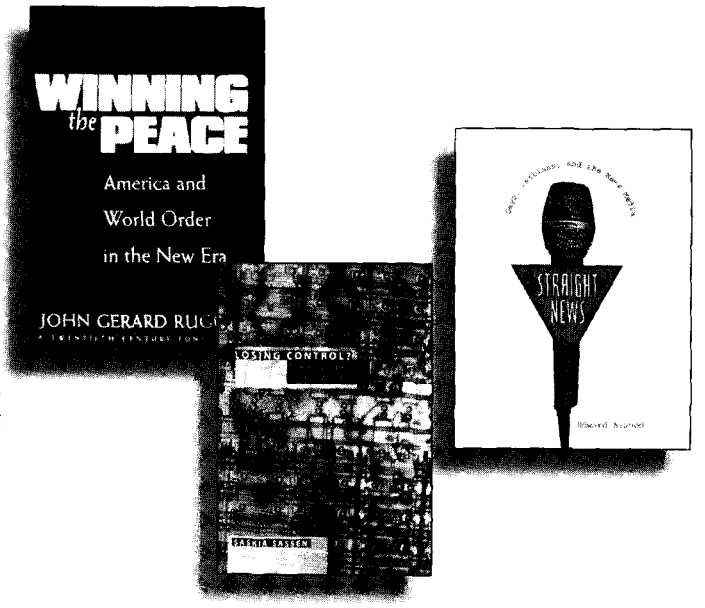

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good Massachusetts Democrat should. He helped break open the Iran-Contra scandal, bring down BCCI, normalize relations with Vietnam. Now he faces a Republican who once called Newt Gingrich—a man with a paltry 19 percent approval rating in the state, his "ideological soulmate"—and he might lose. Because Bill Weld seems like such a good guy.

It's a sexy race, with tall, rich, attractive aristocrats from Harvard and Yale duking it out like common thugs. Kerry just married Teresa Heinz, a colleague's widow seven years his senior and $760 million his richer. But for all the glitz and glamour the amazing thing about this Blue-blood Battle is that the Republican has a real shot. In 1996. In Massachusetts.

That's because not all blue bloods are alike. Weld is a real Yankee eccentric. He's a Deadhead, but one who uses words like "ukase" and "deleterious." He has posed for pictures with Killer Kowalski, Larry the Lobster and Garfield. He lets his aides poke fun of his weight and his gross eating habits on the record. (They say he recently drank a bowl of melted butter, although he claims it was clam juice.) He does not own a TV. After being re-elected in 1994 with 71 percent of the vote, he got stinking drunk and slurred a rambling speech about his pal "Ginrish."

Weld comes off as a guy who can take a joke, who doesn't take himself or his work too seriously, who never gets rattled. Ray Howell, a campaign adviser, thinks for a minute before listing the things that make Weld mad: "Being late. Missing lunch. Bad grammar.... Especially missing lunch." Weld wrote a summa cum laude classics thesis in a few nights at Harvard. He's the Joe DiMaggio of government, making it all look easy.

Actually, the nonchalance is part sham: Weld is a goof, but a cunning goof. When you don't seem to care about anything, no one can hold your priorities hostage. And, if you still don't get your way, no one has to know. People remember that Weld dived into the Charles fully clothed after signing a rivers protection bill; they forget he sat on the legislation for six years and nearly scuttled it at the last minute with a propolluter amendment.

WILLIAM WELD AND JOHN KERRY
BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Nothing ever sticks to Weld. He dodged the Vietnam War with a "back injury." He heartily endorsed Pete Wilson's stillborn presidential campaign. He was gushing about Dick Morris days before Sherry Rowlands showed up. He appointed a convicted armed robber, Angelo Buonopane, as his labor chief. He admitted he didn't know that his administration was paroling second-degree murderers the day after one shot a cop. Willie Horton II? No, a one-day story.

Not that Weld's been a bumbling governor; even Kerry aides privately admit he's done a good job. He's cut taxes sixteen times, balanced his budgets and revived a dismal business climate; he deserves some credit for the state's recovery after the collapse of Mike Dukakis's Massachusetts Miracle. He also enacted some of the nation's strictest welfare reforms, and early results look promising.

But his success owes much to personality, to his co-opting of political opponents. He beat John Silber in 1990; now Silber is his education czar. He demonized then-Senate President William Bulger in that campaign; now they are friends, and Weld has named Bulger to run the University of Massachusetts. Steve Pierce, Weld's 1990 primary opponent, got a top housing job. And all of Weld's successes were achieved with a three-fourths Democratic legislature.

"He's friendly, he returns phone calls, he dives in the river—what's not to like?" says Democratic state Senator James Jajuga. Even Jim Stewart, a liberal activist who holds sit-ins at Weld's office, nearly succumbed to his charisma. "I ran into Weld once in Harvard Square, and he was so friendly," he says. "I remember thinking: No, wait, I'm supposed to hate this guy."

Voters sing the same tune. "He's a very nice man," chirps 76-year-old Rose Belair, watching Weld work an elderly crowd at a Knights of Columbus hall in Methuen. "I like the way he doesn't talk down to you," adds 63-year-old Janet Guzuski. When Ted Kennedy walks into a room like this, blue-haired ladies squeal and try to touch him. With Weld, it's more like an old friend has popped in. "There are a lot of Democrats in this room," Jajuga says. "But who the hell is Trent Lott to these people? They

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don't care about that. They just see a good guy who talks plain English and says what he means."

The charm even works in blue-collar Democratic bars. Weld shamelessly courts the six-pack crowd, appointing urban Democrats to plum jobs, using his State of the State to propose lower beer taxes, even naming a bridge for Democratic stalwart Joe Moakley's late wife. He's as liberal as Kerry on gays and abortion, but in this race he's running as a macho man: tough on welfare, crime and taxes. And he can pull it off because, although he's a patrician millionaire, he seems comfortable boozing it up with the boys. "It drives me nuts," says Mark Govoni, a food service union leader. "Weld busts unions. He fights the minimum wage. But a lot of working people like him. Jesus, we're not electing a guy to hang out in a bar with."

It's a common outburst among Kerry people. "We're not electing a favorite uncle," Senate President Tom Birmingham shouted at a rally in hardscrabble Revere. "This is not a contest of who's the most charming, or the most cuddly," Mary Travers of Peter, Paul and Mary pleaded before a heartfelt rendition of "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" at a Democratic fund-raiser.

When will they ever learn? Kerry's a war hero, an idealist who cares more than Weld, but it's almost impossible to find a public official or an ordinary voter who really likes him. During one debate, when asked why not, he replied that God had made him too earnest. It's true; he seems to inhabit an irony-free zone. Weld aides have circulated a Doonesbury strip from 1971 (Garry Trudeau and Kerry overlapped at Yale) with Mike telling B.D. that John Kerry is coming to speak. "If you care about this country, you better go listen to that John Kerry fellow," a stranger tells them. "He speaks with rare eloquence and astonishing conviction. If you see no one else this year, you must see John Kerry!" The stranger, of course, was John Kerry.

Kerry is clearly in some trouble. After twelve years in Kennedy's shadow, nobody seems to know what he's been doing in Washington. He's called for Social Security reform, an intellectually honest but politically Kevorkian stance. And the best-kept secret beneath the Democratic lock on Massachusetts is that independent voters actually outnumber Democrats in the state.

Fortunately for Kerry, he and Weld are not the only personalities in the race. There are Gingrich and Lott, Weld's worst liabilities. There's Lieutenant Governor Paul Cellucci, a debt-ridden car salesman who gets promoted if Weld wins. There's Clinton, who owns Massachusetts. And there's an obscure conservative candidate named Susan Gallagher, who might siphon enough abortion, gay rights and affirmative action foes from Weld to let Kerry win despite himself.

But he won't win without the yellow dogs. And, for the first time in years, they might not hunt. "I've always voted the party, just because that's what I've always done," Madeleine Abati says. "From now on, I'm voting the man."

MICHAEL GRUNWALD is a reporter for *The Boston Globe.*

CAMPAIGN JOURNAL

EXPERIMENTS IN HIGHER LIVING

By Michael Lewis

October 1:

The Dole Campaign treats me so oddly when I arrive this morning for the trip to Cleveland that I find myself looking back over my shoulder to see if there's some other Michael they're talking to. That I have a name is in itself unusual—normally I'm just checked off the cargo list as "The New Republic," i.e. another magazine writer who together with his readership can safely be ignored. But this morning I am carrying my new Sony Digital Super SteadyShot Handycam DCR-VX1000, a palmable grey box that crack technicians from ABC spent nearly an hour teaching me to use.

Yesterday, I mentioned in passing to a Dole staffer that "I might do some shooting for 'Nightline' tomorrow," as if I was the sort of person who did shooting for "Nightline" all the time. Now a Dole campaign worker named Charlie is standing over me like an old friend. "Hi, Michael," he says. "Good to see you again ... you know you're not allowed to film on the plane." When I step onto the plane a second Dole staffer tells me the same thing. As I take my seat across the coffee table from a radio lady, a third Dole worker stops by and stresses the point. Apparently, the place where the campaign television journalist spends the vast majority of his time is considered outside the bounds of television journalism.

Before all these warnings, it had never occurred to me to film on the Dole plane. Now it does. Just before

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takeoff I stand up and take my first shot. A fat cameraman on his way to the toilet squeezes past a skinny stewardess, and I have him in my cross hairs. "You're not supposed to do that!" a voice shrieks out at me. It's the radio lady, playing narc. Charlie appears beside my seat to remind me of The Rule. He does a nice job of not being upset.

The day unfolds uneventfully (Dole gives a speech in a gym) except for my peculiar new relationship with the Dole campaign staff. Normally I have to set off a flare to get their attention; today, Charlie takes the seat behind me on the bus and for the rest of the day never seems to be very far away. Whatever they think I might do, I don't. By the time the rally starts I have busted the sound mechanism, lost the earplugs and run out of batteries. I put the camera to one side. Charlie vanishes. But then we head back to the plane and a fresh battery. Which brings us to the shrimp episode.

Once we'd settled into our seats I set about trying to fix all the parts of the camera I'd busted. In order not to offend the Dole people, I decided to test the thing on what I figured was a declassified object—a large plate of cold mottled shrimp that had been laid on the table between me and a pair of radio reporters. I hunker right over the little buggers so that the ABC technicians will see I've absorbed what they taught me about not giving in to the temptation of the zoom. But the moment I'm in place the radio woman shrieks out to the Dole staff and makes to cover the shrimp with a sheet of paper. "It's okay," I say, gently. "I'm just seeing if this thing still works." I keep shooting for a good five seconds. Then I put the camera away.

Suddenly, a Dole lady is in my face, teeth gritted, breath blowing. "*We told you seven times not to film on the plane!*" she shouts. "*You don't know how serious this is!*" "But it was just shrimp...." I begin to say, before she cuts me off. "*We told you....*" I want to protest that it's not my fault her guy is twenty points down in the polls and she's on the fast track to not being the next Dee Dee Myers. It's not worth the trouble. I return to *The New York Times*, where Dole's campaign manager, Scott Reed, is quoted as saying that some major event is about to transform public opinion. "We deserve a break and we're going to have one," he explained. Asked to be more specific, he said, "Something. World affairs." It's hard to see how the shrimp fit into this scenario.

October 2-5:

Morry Taylor says he's calling because he has a great deal for me. Some months ago he agreed to speak at a conference in Palm Springs for bigshot manufacturing executives, the heads of such illustrious companies as Caterpillar and John Deere. America's CEOs want to know what it was like to run for president, and Morry thinks that once he tells them they might decide to run, too. Now it seems that on the very day he is scheduled to speak he must undergo tests on his liver. The deal he is offering is that I go in his place and give his speech. What I really want to do, he explains, is to fly across the country and talk to a bunch of people I don't know and probably will never see again and who in any case are deeply disappointed that I am not Morry Taylor. I laugh into the phone.

But Morry can be persuasive when he wants to be. For instance, he is normally withering on the subject of journalism; asked to define "journalist" he will say "people who can't add." Now he tells me that I'm different from other journalists because, "unlike those other guys you're not inserting your private opinion. You just listen and tell people the truth." I nod to myself: how true! "Look," he says, "you can be me for a day. Then you can write about what it was like to be me." I agree to do it; twenty-four hours later I change my mind. When I call to tell him, however, I'm told that Morry has vanished into the bowels of the former Soviet Empire. In spite of his bum liver he's squeezing in visits to the president of the Ukraine, the president of Belarus and the mayor of St. Petersburg to sell them tires.

In Palm Springs, I am standing in a ballroom in the dark beside a stage, waiting to be Morry. A host of well-known executives are introduced—to the same tune that accompanies Bob Hope's College Football All-American Team. One by one they parade through a multi-colored spotlight while the audience claps. Over the titters of the crowd I can just make out the distant squawk of the parrots chained to posts in the hotel lobby. Then the man at the podium calls for silence. He tells the audience about Morry's campaign and delivers the sad news about Morry's liver. What is striking about the introduction is not its content but its solemnity: here is one place the Taylor campaign is no joke. The audience is filled with bigshots from the Midwest, just as Morry promised. My job is not only to be Morry but to explain to them why they should want to be Morry, too. The only help I have from Morry is a four-page handwritten fax, decorated from top to bottom with Have A Nice Day smiley faces. It is mostly illegible and contains only two policy prescriptions, beneath the subhead "Two Things We Could Do To Help This Nation":

"*1) Close the Law Schools for Ten Years. 2) Elect Just Women For Ten Years. Go Get 'Em Mike. If you Do a Good Job I'll Spot you 12 points in racquetball.*"

I decide to tread gently with the businessmen and tell them first about one of Morry's plans for slashing government waste. "The Census Bureau," he says. "They count you every ten years. What do they do the other nine years?" The businessmen don't laugh. I am afraid to look any closer and see what species of bemusement has settled on their faces. I have a Midwestern translation problem; in the Midwest jokes that might also be serious are strange. The faults in American culture are usually drawn along lines of race and gender. But that is just a cheap way of simplifying the myriad of distinctions that render people inaccessible to one another. A 35-year-old-white-male journalist from New Orleans who has never made or even fixed anything in his life has about as much of a chance of

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plugging into the sensibility of a 65-year-old white male businessman from Kansas City who has devoted his life to perfecting the tractor as he does an Aborigine.

Not for the first time it occurs to me how unlikely it was that Morry pole-vaulted himself out of this culture and into politics. He wasn't like Ross Perot, whose career had as much to do with manipulating government officials as with mixing it up with free-market types. On stage with the other candidates in Iowa and New Hampshire Morry was a different species, as I am here. But unlike Morry I do not have rubber tires to fall back upon; I'm a talker, not a doer. And so I do what all talkers do in the Midwest when their jokes are hitting nothing but air. "But seriously...." I say, and then wind up telling a story about the moment Morry Taylor became my candidate. It's a serious story, for serious people. I've never been allowed to tell it in print here because various editors felt it made me look like a fool. But here it is:

I came into the Land Yacht one night in Iowa to find Morry shouting at one of his piss boys. That in itself wasn't unusual. What was unusual was that he was shouting about the sort of thing an ordinary politician might shout about: some journalist had dug into his past and found a story. My first reaction was to be slightly saddened that this man who violated all the rules of presidential politics obeyed this one: he had something in his past he was trying to hide. He had a secret.

Eventually I pried it out of the piss boy. A couple of years ago Morry was on a business trip in Des Moines when he came across a sad article in the local paper. A local black high-school student—a football star and an honor student—had been shot while on vacation in Chicago. The bullet left him paralyzed from the waist down. His parents had remodeled their home to accommodate the wheelchair but in the end came up $10,000 short and were being forced to sell their home. Morry read about it and sent $10,000 to the family anonymously, through their lawyer. The newspapers wrote a story about an anonymous benefactor. And that was that, except that once Morry was running for president the paper had somehow heard that he was the man and planned to write it up.

That was what I had walked in on: Morry had just been told that some local journalist had found out about his gift and was threatening to expose him. You'll have to trust me when I say that Morry was as livid as if it had been a real scandal: he felt that the last thing the family needed was to feel indebted to some rich guy running for president.

As I speak some part of my brain drifts away. This is the natural conclusion of politics; the follower seeks to meld himself into the leader. When he appears on stage or on television George Stephanopoulos *becomes* Bill Clinton. Today, at last, I have become Morry Taylor.

October 6:

I suffer a momentary loss of nerve caused by being unappreciated by bigshot businessmen; when the businessman beside me on the flight from Palm Springs to Hartford asks me what I do for a living I'm embarrassed to say that I'm a journalist. That is, until I pull down from the overhead rack and fiddle conspicuously with my Sony Digital Super SteadyShot Handycam DCR-VX1000 with its 3CCD Digital Zoom (20X!) festooned with various stickers that say ABC News.

On the streets outside the debate hall in Hartford the Super SteadyShot wreaks havoc. Many hundreds of previously listless protesters leap into action at the sight of it. "Let's Have Some Action for ABC!" I shout, and the effect is distinctly more dramatic than if I'd said "Let's Have Some Action for THE NEW REPUBLIC." They rise as one and proclaim their causes. One moment they are an undifferentiated jumble of people shivering in the cold; the next they are ardent supporters of Nader and Perot, pro-life and anti-vivisection, anti-deficit and pro-welfare.

Of course the SteadyShot is not permitted inside the Bushnell Theater. It is too powerful a weapon to be permitted close to the candidates. So, after a brief altercation with a security guard, I retire to Spin Alley. Spin Alley is what the debate organizers have renamed the Hartford Civic Center, until a few journalists start pointing out that only a few years ago political hacks actually denied that they "spun" at all. The signs saying "Spin Alley" are then ripped down—which, when you think about it, is itself a form of spin.

At any rate, the Super SteadyShot penetrates Spin Alley, emanating its extraordinary force field. When she enters the frame the comely Maureen Dowd dives behind her notepad, and who can blame her? Once you are in the camera's eye you no longer have control of your soul. Truly it is astonishing the way all of the important people cave to the camera. I point it at Mike McCurry, then at Tom Ridge, then at Robert Reich. They answer questions that they might ignore if it were just me and mine eye—How do you feel as you stand there spinning me? If you truly felt your candidate had lost would you say as much? They are not talking to me, of course, but to some notional audience, "the American people." And whatever they might be thinking they treat the camera with deference. In the same way that ordinary people feel obliged to smile when they have their picture taken, even when they are unhappy, important people feel pressured to answer sincerely even when they are insincere.

I miss the debate entirely; I am too busy taking pictures of people assessing the debate, which they do from the moment it starts. No matter. I am able to track its effect between the lines of Scott Reed's quotes. Tomorrow in *The New York Times* Reed will revise his mental picture of the campaign. "This is going to be a steady building process for the next 30 days," he will say. "There's not going to be an overnight shift." All of a sudden it's looking as if every little shrimp might matter. •

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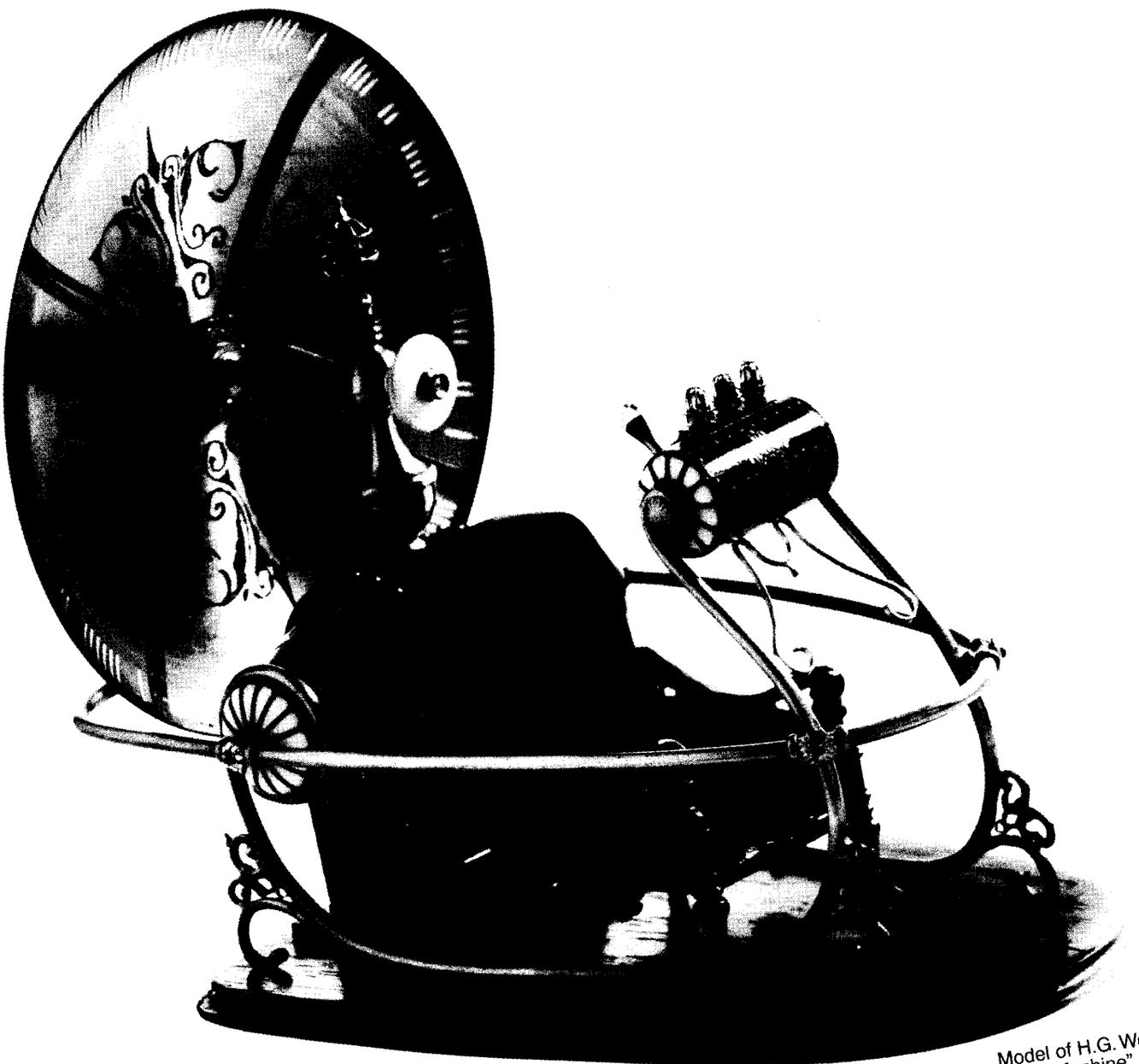

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FINGERPRINTS

By Maud S. Beelman

On April 27, 1994, Peter Galbraith, the U.S. ambassador to Croatia, sent a secret cable to Secretary of State Warren Christopher: Would the United States allow Iranian arms shipments to reach the Bosnians? The matter was urgent, Galbraith warned; Washington had already taken a week to think it over, and any further hesitation could scuttle the plan. For the Clinton administration, the proposal had a certain appeal. Though it wasn't willing to overrule European allies and arm Bosnia directly, the administration was convinced that military pressure on the Serbs represented the only way to stop Europe's worst bloodshed since World War II. Allowing Iran to arm Bosnia via Croatia meant that weapons would reach the flailing Muslim-led government in Sarajevo without American "fingerprints." Two days later, Washington approved Galbraith's proposal, setting in motion a policy that has come to haunt the Clinton administration and to epitomize its foreign policy shortcomings.

Far from initiating a bold, coherent strategy, the decision further Balkanized the fragmented U.S. policy on Bosnia. Senior National Security Council and State Department officials didn't tell their CIA and Pentagon counterparts of the risky gamble, fearing both leaks and objections. The CIA station chief in Croatia, sure his ambassador was running a rogue operation à la Iran-Contra, reported secretly to headquarters on Galbraith's meetings and conversations. The U.S. ambassador to Bosnia learned of the deal from the Bosnians, but not from his own government.

The troubling legacy of that 1994 decision is still with us. In Bosnia, the decision allowed Iran to insinuate itself throughout the Muslim leadership, part of which now views Tehran, not Washington, as the trusted ally. And a continuing Iranian presence of up to 150 military advisers and fighters threatens American troops and U.S. efforts at consensus-building among Bosnia's three ethnic groups. At home, the policy has raised serious questions about whether U.S. law was violated.

Senior administration officials have testified before Congress that the United States did nothing more than stand mute when the Croatians sought permission to allow, for a price, the transit of Iranian arms to Bosnia. But they may well have played a far more active role, including meeting with Iranian intermediaries, maintaining operational oversight of the weapons flow and promising a covert arms operation of their own. A Republican-led congressional inquiry has just concluded that several administration officials perjured themselves before Congress and that there was a "high probability" Galbraith had "engaged in an unlawful covert action," government sources familiar with the inquiry said. A criminal investigation has been recommended.

"This was a foreign policy blunder.... If they wanted to get arms to the Bosnians, they should have been forceful with the Allies and used the tool they had, which was covert action," said one intelligence source. "What they did was talk like a superpower and act like a wimp, and to me that was a very bad foreign policy decision. But was it illegal? No, I don't think so. Was it a covert action? No, I don't think so."

The policy had started taking shape by at least October 1993. That month, Iran and Croatia began secret negotiations on supplying the Croats with weapons they needed to retake rebel Serb-held land if Zagreb could guarantee that additional Iranian weapons would be funneled to the Bosnians next door. A year earlier, the U.S. had ordered Croatia to turn back an Iranian jumbo jet that landed in Zagreb loaded with weapons. This time, though, Washington kept silent. U.S. officials believed that the Croats, as the second strongest force in former Yugoslavia after the Serbs, were key to a balance of power that could end the war. "We kind of took a passive, hands-off approach given our view that the arms embargo was unfair," said a senior Clinton administration official, speaking on condition he not be named. "Even though we had strong reservations about anybody getting into bed with the Iranians, in the context of the Balkan conflict, we decided not to obstruct it, not to try to undo the deal."

By March 1994, American diplomats had concluded negotiations to form a federation of Bosnian Muslims and Croats that halted their war-within-a-war. They also secured two strategic objectives: unifying, theoretically at least, the anti-Serb forces in Bosnia and guaranteeing a weapons route from Croatia. A month later, Galbraith

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cabled his recommendations. The United States informed the Croatian government it would not object if Iranian arms were funneled to the Bosnians. The decision became known as the "no instructions" policy, a diplomatic obfuscation in which the absence of "no" means "yes."

Government sources familiar with the investigation say State Department documents and CIA memos suggest the ambassador was even more instrumental in the arms transfers than he has admitted. Galbraith had long been interested in how the Bosnians might arm themselves. Between December 1993 and March 1994, sources say, he asked three different CIA officials about covertly arming the Bosnians, wondering how much weaponry $250 million would buy and inquiring about the ramifications of the U.S. looking the other way on Iranian arms shipments. Meanwhile, he had developed a close working relationship with Croatian Defense Minister Gojko Susak, sometimes meeting with him over meals at the ambassador's residence. Susak was anxious for Croatia to procure the kind of sophisticated weapons the Iranians could provide, especially surface-to-surface missiles that could hit Serbia. One-third of Croatia remained in Serb hands, and Zagreb had lost patience with U.N. mediation. Besides, from Susak's perspective, arms shipments to Bosnia that passed through Croatia had an added advantage: they could be screened to keep out strategic weapons, in case of a future Muslim-Croat war.

In contrast to Susak, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, a nationalist Roman Catholic fiercely suspicious of Islam, was more hesitant about the pipeline and wanted assurances that Washington, whose approval in general he coveted, would not object. So on April 29, 1994, Galbraith gave Tudjman the "no instructions" message. When the Croatian president seemed not to understand, Galbraith testified he added, "pay attention to what I did not say." In his May testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Galbraith acknowledged that the message "was intended to tell them that we were not objecting." He denied, however, that U.S. officials hatched the plan or did anything to encourage or facilitate weapons shipments from Iran to Bosnia.

But in his secret cable to Warren Christopher on April 27, 1994, Galbraith urged approval of an answer "that indirectly signaled that we will not/not object if Croatia were to facilitate the transshipment of weapons." Time was short, he added, because "Croatian Prime Minister Valentic will leave for Tehran April 29. The Iranians have made clear that the only thing to be accepted ... on the trip is arrangements for the transshipment of arms. If the Croatians understand that we would frown on their role in supplying the Muslims, this trip may be cancelled. If it is cancelled, the Muslims will likely understand that Croatia is not willing to be helpful in their hour of need with attendant consequences for future Muslim-Croatian cooperation," Galbraith wrote. In a telephone conversation the same day with Alexander Vershbow, then deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs, Galbraith explained that arms would arrive in unmarked Iranian 747s, and the Croats would get half of them. He assured Washington, in the words of a government source, that "we can handle without our fingerprints."

Galbraith has denied in interviews and before Congress that he met with any Iranian interlocutors. But he did meet with the senior Muslim cleric in Croatia who the CIA says was an intermediary for Iran. Additionally, a U.S. official in the Balkans said he read an intelligence account of a September 1994 meeting attended by a high-ranking U.S. government official, identified separately as Galbraith. In the meeting near the Croatian port city of Split, Galbraith "talked with representatives of Muslim countries on payment for arms that would be sent to Bosnia," the official said. No time frame was specified; the dollar amount mentioned in the report was $500 million-$800 million. The U.S. official said he also saw subsequent "operational reports" in 1995 on almost weekly arms shipments of automatic weapons, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, anti-armor rockets and TOW missiles. For one September 1995 shipment, U.S. military experts flew from Germany to Zagreb to inspect sophisticated Iranian missiles bound for Bosnia to ensure they didn't have chemical warheads. Enraged at Iran's apparent attempt to slip super weapons past Croat monitors, the Croatian defense minister nonetheless sent the missiles on to Bosnia "just as Peter told us to do," sources familiar with the episode said.

But Galbraith was not the only senior Clinton administration official who pledged to uphold the embargo and apparently worked behind the scenes to subvert it. In September 1994, Richard Holbrooke, whose confirmation as assistant secretary of state was then pending, made a fact-finding visit to Sarajevo. With him were several high-ranking U.S. diplomatic and military officials, who met separately with Bosnian army and Croat militia commanders to discuss arms shipments to the federation, according to two participants at the meeting. One participant insisted the discussion was hypothetical planning for the day when the arms embargo would be lifted. The other described how the meeting broke up in disarray when the senior U.S. diplomat there, special envoy Charles Thomas, said the United States would be willing, under certain circumstances, to ship arms directly to the Bosnian Muslims. Bosnian Croat military commanders, long worried about Bosnian Muslims receiving weapons independently, stormed out of the session, which had to be reconvened the next day.

Although Holbrooke told the Senate Select Intelligence Committee last May that "there was never a covert action, we never considered one," several U.S. government officials said weapons assistance to Bosnia was indeed talked about. CIA officials, acting on a tip from Islamic sources, learned that Holbrooke and Galbraith met in September 1994 with senior Bosnian and Croat officials to discuss a tentative covert arms plan, government sources said. The Bosnians believed the United States had promised them weapons assistance, which is why President Alija Izetbegovic told the United Nations

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in late September 1994 that he was putting on hold for six months his request to have the arms embargo lifted. Coming from no less an authority than the leader of the beleaguered Bosnian nation, that statement undercut congressional pressure for an end to the weapons ban. It also paved the way for passage of a compromise amendment that prohibited U.S. enforcement of the embargo while falling short of lifting it unilaterally.

"As part of the discussion with the Bosnians it became clear that one way to encourage them to defer their pressures for lift would be helping them get stuff even with the embargo still on," said the senior Clinton administration official. "So Holbrooke raised the issue of should we encourage third countries to help them without orchestrating it, which would get us closer to the line of covert activity.... The bottom line that both Christopher and [National Security Adviser Anthony] Lake reached was that this would get us to the point that could be seen by allies as carrying out unilateral lift by another name. It would take us that much closer to direct complicity, and it wasn't worth the risk."

A senior Bosnian government official said later that Holbrooke had obviously made promises for which he didn't yet have Washington's backing. "Dick Holbrooke may have, through his body language and his enthusiasm for the idea, even though he made no promises or commitments, may have given them the sense that it was only a matter of dotting the I's and crossing the T's, when in fact this had to be considered at high levels, and we decided not to do it," the administration official conceded. "Expectations certainly were raised."

If the administration wanted to build up Bosnia's military capabilities, why not do so covertly, through the CIA, rather than allow Iran to increase its presence and influence in Bosnia? For one thing, Lake, Christopher and some in the CIA believed a legal covert operation could never be kept secret. Britain and France, which unlike the United States had U.N. peacekeepers in Bosnia, made clear that if the arms embargo were lifted, or the West "took sides" by arming one group over another, they would withdraw, leaving the United States military to fill the vacuum. "The approach we took ... preserved our plausible deniability. And I think it was convenient for the allies who didn't want to pull out.... Overt lift, covert lift or being confronted with direct U.S. involvement would have forced them into an untenable position," said the Clinton administration official.

But the administration also ruled out covert activity because, in the wake of the Aldrich Ames spy scandal, it apparently didn't trust the CIA. In fact, the CIA was never told of the policy reversal on Iranian arms shipments. The first word that something was afoot came to then-CIA Director James Woolsey from his worried Zagreb station chief, who feared another Iran-Contra in the making. From May through October 1994, Woolsey said in an interview, "we didn't know whether it was a clear-cut decision by the president or some kind of backing-and-forthing between the NSC and State and the ambassador, or the ambassador pushing and people at State or the NSC reluctantly going along." Those questions remain unanswered.

Left out of the loop and convinced Galbraith was engaged in questionable, if not illegal, activities, CIA officials monitored possible U.S. involvement in the Iranian arms pipeline. Then, as American troops settled into their Bosnian duties last spring, agency sources leaked word of it. They were determined the CIA not be blamed for the heightened Iranian presence in Bosnia or for any terrorist attacks on U.S. troops there.

"When you dine with the devil you better have a long spoon," said one American who was ordered out of Bosnia in the summer of 1995 after Washington learned Iranian intelligence agents were plotting to kill him. The Iranian threat increased significantly in 1995, U.S. intelligence and diplomatic sources said. Suspected Iranian agents videotaped the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb, and the CIA station chief in Sarajevo was forced to abandon his post shortly after arriving because of an Iranian death threat. "We weren't generating gutsy policy," one frustrated State Department official said. "We did this to buy a little more time, so we didn't have to step into a leadership role. We were even willing to let the Iranians in ... that's the tragedy here."

In the short term, it could be argued, the plan was successful. Better-armed Croats and Bosnians eventually dealt the Serbs battlefield losses that, combined with more aggressive NATO airstrikes in fall 1995, led to the Dayton peace plan. But the same result could have been achieved with weapons from a different source, and the long-term consequences of allowing the Iranians to do the job are already obvious.

Just before the September 14 Bosnian elections, U.S. troops were again alerted to a possible terrorist attack from Iranian or Iranian-backed fighters who entered Bosnia along with the arms. The U.S. army wants to build a concrete blast barrier to protect soldiers in Sarajevo from what one officer called "a heavy Iranian presence." Meanwhile, the U.S. program to equip and train Bosnian Muslim and Croat "federation" forces, a key element of the Dayton peace accord, was delayed nine months to force the Bosnians to expel foreign fighters.

"The U.S. government conducted a disinformation campaign," said one congressional critic. "Their public policy was an out-and-out falsehood given what they were doing." Indeed, just nine days before Galbraith delivered the "no instructions" to the Croatians, President Clinton explained why the United States was sticking with the arms embargo. "If we ignore a United Nations embargo because we think it has no moral basis, or even any legal validity, but everyone else feels contrary, then what is to stop our United Nations allies from ignoring embargoes that we like, such as the embargo against Saddam Hussein?" Clinton told reporters in Washington. "How can we ever say again to all of the other people in the United Nations, 'You must follow other embargoes'? That's a serious question for me." •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

Vote early

There is no greater value in contemporary political life than genuinely democratic elections. But, as last month's voting in Bosnia suggests, elections may not be the best way to get democracy started. The problem, curiously, lies in our own democratic convictions. Elections, even if only barely free, legitimize the winners. The winners often (in Bosnia, for example) aren't democrats, and yet they acquire in our minds a certain democratic standing. The new Bosnian presidents, said Assistant Secretary of State John Kornblum, "now have some kind of democratic mandate." This is a useful credential: they will likely use it to ensure that they never again have to face a democratic challenge.

Here is an old paradox: people can vote freely against voting freely; they can give a "mandate" to a dictator or bring to power a party committed to one-party rule. The real test of democracy isn't the first election but the second and third. And a *series* of free elections depends on two things: the right of opposition and the right of succession. A good many victors in democratic elections around the world don't recognize either. They are not relativists, after all; they know what God, or History, or Truth, or Justice requires, and, while they may accept the practical necessity of competing for power now, their aim is to end the competition so they can pursue imperatives they cherish more deeply than the democratic process.

This problem was once discussed chiefly with reference to Communist parties, whose leaders often expressed their contempt for "bourgeois civil liberties." The point of the class struggle was to win once and for all. Now the democratic dilemma arises most often when radical Islamic parties join in electoral politics—though the problem of religious zealotry is in fact more general. Contempt for democracy is roughly equal among Muslim radicals, Christian fundamentalists, ultra-orthodox Jews and Hindu nationalists (yet this doesn't keep such groups from crafting skilled electoral appeals). Should such groups be allowed to compete in democratic elections? Should we encourage elections in countries where they are likely to win?

In the West, the rights of opposition and succession were established long before the victory of democratic politics—when, for example, eighteenth-century British Whigs and Tories recognized one another as legitimate opponents and potential rulers. Both groups were oligarchic and corrupt. Left oppositionists, if there were any, certainly would have thought of the two as tweedledee-and-dummish. And yet we are indebted to the Whigs and Tories for some of the crucial attitudes and practices of democratic government, including governmental tolerance for two literary and artistic expressions of free politics: satire and caricature.

Perhaps opposition and succession were accepted because Whigs and Tories were really so alike, factions of the same ruling class of gentlemen and merchants. We might think of their competition as practice for the fiercer and more consequential politics that came later. In the world today, there is not much time for practice. Corrupt oligarchies are quickly overthrown by populist, pan-nationalist or fundamentalist movements that promise popular rule but deliver only tyranny-in-the-people's-name (or in the name of God or History or Culture). The winners may hold elections, but they aren't friendly to the idea of rotation in office.

I have no nostalgia (not much, anyway) for the old oligarchies. But many of today's popular mobilizers, though they bring unprecedented numbers of people into the streets and voting booths, many for the first time, do not help to create a democratic political life. Their leaders have too singular and too certain a conception of God, the People or the Nation. They want to disenfranchise infidels, punish blasphemy with death, confine women to the household or drive ethnic minorities across the border—actions which, needless to say, do not foster democratic culture.

But, if they are banned, can the election still be called free? Aren't the dangers of populist/nationalist/fundamentalist tyranny often exaggerated by old oligarchies eager to hold on to their own democratically illegitimate positions? Yes, sometimes. And yet it may also, sometimes, be right to keep a party off the ballot (as was done with Rabbi Kahane's Kach, which would have refused equal rights to Israeli Arabs) or to deny it the fruits of a free election (as in Algeria in 1993, when the Islamic Salvation Front seemed likely to establish a regime even more repressive than the one it sought to replace).

These are probably not matters for principled decision-making—except in the broad sense that the decisions are best made by men and women with democratic principles. But it isn't their principles but rather their practical judgment that should guide the decision process; philosophy is of little help. If those running on anti-democratic agendas are divided among themselves, and if they are likely to be forced into coalitions and compromises (as with the Islamic Welfare Party in Turkey today), it probably makes sense to allow them to campaign and even to win. Exercising power within a democratic framework may provide a useful education. But if the fundamentalists (or nationalists or populists) are united and likely to take power by themselves, it is probably better to postpone the elections. "Probably" is the best anyone can do here.

These decisions are necessarily made at the last minute, when the zealots are knocking at the door, already strong enough to contest free elections effectively. But the most important battle for democrats comes before that last minute. This is probably best described, though the term is too fashionable these days, as a battle for civil society. Even in the absence of free elections, it is possible to have a free press, religious freedom, associational pluralism, the right to organize unions, the right to move freely, and so on. Often, I think, our government might usefully press for these sorts of freedoms abroad rather than for the ritual of the ballot box. A lively, contentious, pluralist civil society is a critically important public space in which men and women acquire organizational competence, acknowledge each other's different opinions and interests, negotiate alliances, learn to compromise—and perhaps even come to abhor the zealots in their midst who hate the liveliness and dream of repressing it. And then it is time to hold elections and to decide whether the zealots should be invited to participate, or told to stay home, or locked up: all these are or can be legitimate contrivances for the sake of democratic politics. They won't always work. But, when they don't, we should be slow to recognize the "mandate" of the triumphant anti-democrats. It's more often the losers who are the true friends of democracy.

MICHAEL WALZER

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Antonioni: Some Notes

The latest work by Michelangelo Antonioni, one of the premier artists in the world history of film, is **Beyond the Clouds.** I put no distributor after the title because, as yet, it has none for this country, although one is said to be en route. The picture was shown at the recent New York Film Festival. As one who has severely questioned that festival, I must note that it has shown all three of Antonioni's films since *The Passenger* (1975). The two others were *The Mystery of Oberwald* (1980), adapted from a Cocteau play (one of only three films in Antonioni's career adapted from other people's material) and *Identification of a Woman* (1982). None of the three most recent films has yet been released here. One doesn't have to believe that they are first-rank Antonioni in order to shudder at a system in which new works by a major artist are, so to speak, not acknowledged to exist.

Antonioni was 83 when he made *Beyond the Clouds* and, because of a stroke in 1985, paralyzed down his right side. He cannot speak. (I once had a ninety-minute conversation with him on PBS. When he was in New York in 1992, we shook hands—left hands—and he made some sounds in his throat.) How did he do a film?

First, the screenplay. It consists of four stories adapted from pieces in his book, *That Bowling Alley on the Tiber.* On this adaptation he had the help of his longtime collaborator Tonino Guerra and of Wim Wenders. Wenders directed the prologue and epilogue of the film and also served as standby director. (Wenders, eminent in his own right, has long been associated with the novelist-dramatist-filmmaker Peter Handke, whose work has distinct affinities with Antonioni.) The co-cinematographer, with Alfio Contini, was Robby Müller, a Wenders veteran.

Impressive though this team certainly is, its members emphasize that the whole project was closely under Antonioni's control. This becomes clear very early. The prologue done by Wenders is cinematically trite. We see the wing of an airliner above the clouds, then shots of the plane's interior and a man within it, then that of the man from the outside—as he looks through a window. (This shot, very familiar, always tickles me. From whose point of view? A passing angel's?) But, as soon as the first story begins, so does the real Antonioni. His ability to *see* is still overwhelming. We're in Ferrara (his hometown). A long perspective of a cloister-like walk with two modern young people in it strikes an Antonioni chord: people of the European present still embraced by the past, like it or not.

The man we met on the airplane is the *compère* for the film. He addresses us in English, sometimes on camera, sometimes on the soundtrack. He is a film director, the "I" of the *Tiber* book, thus Antonioni. (Whether this is true in the second story, where the man has an affair, is a bit more ambiguous.) John Malkovich plays this narrator-guide and is obviously meant to give the man depth. Malkovich has intelligence: even his worst performances convey it. But I don't find him, as is clearly intended, someone whom I immediately want to know more about.

For the first of the four stories Antonioni has found two young actors, Inès Sastre and Kim Rossi-Stuart, who are astonishingly beautiful. Lovers in Antonioni films are usually played by attractive people, sometimes more than that, but these two are remarkable. Antonioni seems to have departed from his usual practice in this instance to emphasize that their very difference from us, terrific though we of course all are, is emblematic.

The story (in Italian) is about a delayed encounter. The two meet by chance, then spend the night separately in different hotel rooms. Three years later they again meet accidentally, and this time they go to bed; but, after he has adored her exquisite body, he suddenly leaves, without actually making love. Nothing is said. We are meant to infer his thought that actual sex would be only a utilization of this perfect encounter, not its fulfillment. Tacitly, she perhaps agrees. If we can register the difference from the way we less beautiful persons might behave, the episode is, in two senses, platonic.

The three other stories are less resonant. In Portofino our cicerone meets a young woman who tells him in their first conversation (done in English) that she murdered her father, stabbed him twelve times. Since she was acquitted in

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her trial, the killing was apparently justified. (We don't learn why.) Her declaration doesn't discourage the man. They go to bed. Then he leaves, having said that he thinks twelve stabs were "domestic," fewer would have been murder. The woman's confession and its sexual effect on him have a certain pungency, but it quickly evaporates.

The third episode, set in Paris and done in French, is so neat that it's almost a satire on the neatness of French boulevard comedy. A wife leaves her husband because he won't stop an affair. She tries to rent the apartment of a man, she learns, whose wife has just left him for a lover. The two bereft ones get together.

The fourth episode, set in Aix-en-Provence and also done in French, is Gallic in a different way—a sort of Maupassant twist. A young man tries to pick up a young woman, even accompanying her to church. (Imagine a huge crucifix in the background of an Antonioni shot.) She is amiable, but she tells him that she is in love. As he walks her home, he asks what would happen if he fell in love with her. She says, "It would be like lighting a candle in a room full of light." When they part at her door, she tells him that the next day she will enter a convent.

There's also a witty little sketch, between the second and third episodes, apparently because Antonioni wanted a touch of lightness and a whiff of nostalgia. Marcello Mastroianni is a painter on a hill doing a landscape that Cézanne once painted, except that now there's a factory in the vista. Along comes Jeanne Moreau, who (in French) questions the worth of copying. He says that if he can at least repeat one gesture that Cézanne made, he will be gratified.

The chuckle is about more than painterly repetition. Moreau and Mastroianni were together in one of Antonioni's masterpieces, *La Notte* (1960).

None of these stories, except the first, incises deeply, but all of them are immersed in a sense of place, *riche* but not *nouveau riche*, no ostentation. Some old Antonioni elements and some new ones are used. We see a bit of a street carnival, as in *Blow-Up*; boats pass by just outside a window, as in *Red Desert*; the wind is a character in a scene, as in *Eclipse*. New elements are the cross-fades—I can't remember dissolves from one shot into another in previous Antonioni films—and the cuts to a black screen. But the most startling novelty is negative: the absence of his revolutionary attitude toward time. As Mark Rudman has said, "Antonioni is among the few directors who have had the courage to experiment with real time." (Remember the two lovers by the railroad track in *L'Avventura*, Vittoria at the airfield in *Eclipse*.) Not here. Time is used in conventional filmic ways. Apparently Antonioni felt that this material would not bear the weight of the virtual experience that he used so brilliantly in the past.

None of the performances is extraordinary, though all are adequate. The best-known actors, other than those already named, are Fanny Ardant, as the Parisian wife, and Irène Jacob as the nun-to-be.

This will almost certainly be Antonioni's last film. Whatever we think of it, we can all be glad that it was made. A collection of his writings and interviews, *The Architecture of Vision*, was published here recently. In one article he says:

> There are moments when I seem to perceive, however confusedly, the *why* of certain things. When this happens, I become a combative optimist.... Am I not still here, making films (good ones, bad ones, whatever) which are always against something and someone? Isn't this obstinacy? And isn't this obstinacy itself a kind of optimism?

Perhaps the trouble with *Beyond the Clouds* is that it isn't "against" enough. But the obstinacy is inarguable. •

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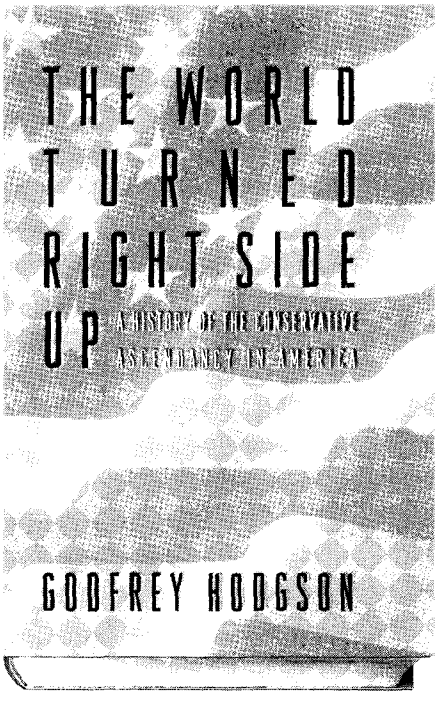

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The True Disadvantage

By Joe Klein

When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor by William Julius Wilson

(Alfred A. Knopf, 322 pp., $26)

William Julius Wilson threatens to become the Ultimate Reasonable Voice on the most vexing social issue in the United States: the urban underclass. He has been called "a giant" by *The New York Times*, which published excerpts from this, his latest book, in its Sunday magazine. His research proposals draw six-figure payoffs from major foundations. His departure from the University of Chicago for Harvard was called a "crisis" for the former and a triumph for the latter. He is often cited by the president (with whom he disagrees on welfare reform, but no matter); and liberals have come, belatedly, to speak his name in the hushed, reverent manner once reserved for Adlai Stevenson or Eleanor Roosevelt.

Respect must be paid. More than any other individual, Wilson deserves credit for civilizing the once noxious debate on race and poverty, for allowing what was once considered unspeakable (by liberals) to be spoken. He *has* been a reasonable voice. He was the first prominent African American scholar to acknowledge the truth of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's famous report of 1965 on the impending disintegration of the black family, thus ending what can only be described as a brief, barbaric Dark Age for the sociology of this subject. And he suffered for the sin of intellectual honesty. Wilson was cast into the outer darkness for nearly a decade after the publication in 1978 of *The Declining Significance of Race*, in which he made the inconvenient observation that a black middle class had emerged after the legislative triumphs of the civil rights movement—and that it behaved differently from the urban poor, who were growing isolated from the rest of society. Wilson refused to romanticize the violence of the slums as an appropriate, if inchoate, rebellion against racist "oppression." He would not condone the exploding out-of-wedlock birthrate as an "alternative" lifestyle.

As recently as a decade ago, these were considered suspect, somewhat "insensitive" positions by white liberals, and anathema to black politicians and sociologists. Wilson was called a neoconservative, which irked him; he was, and is, a social democrat. He was accused of "blaming the victim," an epithet as popular among members of the so-called helping professions as "mo-fo" is among those whom they profess to help. Inevitably, he was invited to meet President Reagan. Horrified, Wilson called the White House and told them that a terrible mistake had been made.

In 1987, Wilson published *The Truly Disadvantaged*, in which he posited his now-famous theory that the pathologies of the slums—though he was careful not to call them "pathologies," or "a culture of poverty"—had been caused by the loss of work, specifically manufacturing jobs, to the suburbs and Third World countries. Men without the prospect of work were more likely to behave in an antisocial manner, more likely to be violent and seek escape through drugs, more likely to behave irresponsibly toward women. This, too, was considered a bit dicey by many liberals. In proposing a cure, Wilson was conceding that there was a sickness. He had come close to acknowledging the truth of the conservative insistence that there were serious normative problems in the slums.

And yet his thesis provided the left with its first plausible ammunition in the intellectual battle against the neoconservatives. In 1984, Charles Murray had argued in *Losing Ground* that a new poverty, rooted in behavior rather than in economics, had been facilitated by federal programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), that these programs had done more harm than good, and that they deserved to be scrapped. Liberals required a new line of defense against Murray's total and influential assault; and gradually they found themselves using Wilson's economic determinism to counter Murray's governmental determinism. Foundation grants from the usual suspects—Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie, MacArthur and many others—began to flow. William Julius Wilson was welcomed home.

Wilson's reputation for intellectual honesty, and the enormous amounts of data that he was compiling from the Chicago slums, raised the expectations for his new book; and the political environment raised the stakes. At the very least, he was expected to build upon his last work. It seemed clear that the moral collapse of the dependent poor was a phenomenon too complicated to be explained merely by economic determinism or by Murray's equally simple notion of liberal "good intentions" gone awry. It seemed time for someone—and Wilson was the obvious candidate—to make a more sophisticated case: that the rise of a distinctive poverty of dependency in the 1960s was the result of an incredibly complex interplay of factors. Economic circumstances and the flaccid paternalism of the welfare state were part of it, to be sure. But there was also the flight of stable black middle-class sorts to the suburbs (which Wilson was among the first to discuss), as well as the legacy of racism and the witless, confrontational race politics practiced by many of the "community leaders" who remained in the cities.

It seemed time not only to put economics in its place, but also to admit culture into the analysis. Most important (but least intuitable by a numbers-crunching sociologist) was the disastrous impact of a crass, indulgent culture of affluence upon people without the social wherewithal, or the personal confidence, to delay gratification. To make such a case, Wilson would have to go beyond his sort of sociology—which hates normative judgments and loves statistics—and his maddeningly conventional political ideology. He would also have to overcome a bipartisan reluctance to examine the narcotic effects of affluence upon the culture. This is another intellectually inconvenient discussion. It requires conservatives to reflect upon the unrestrained worship of the market, and liberals to recognize the horrific impact of moral relativism on the poor. It would require far greater subtlety than the current public debate about "values," which inevitably reduces itself to the inanity of Bob Dole's crude attempt to reestablish a Legion of Decency. (Cinematic violence is OK, if it's patriotic gore.)

The conventional categories of politics and social science, in sum, would have to be transcended. Unfortunately, Wilson has transcended nothing. His new book doesn't begin to scratch the surface of our urban complications. Nor does he provide the more pragmatic service of offering plausible sug-

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gestions to ameliorate the continuing disaster. Several years ago, I heard Wilson speak passionately—and very effectively—about the need for a different, more job-oriented sort of "guidance counseling" in urban high schools. He had been out in the schools; he knew what he was talking about. There was reason to hope that *When Work Disappears* would provide more such practical, small-bore suggestions and perhaps some larger conclusions about what works and what doesn't. But Wilson makes only a half-hearted attempt at the former, and provides none of the latter.

This is a tortured, unconvincing and profoundly disappointing book. The reason is clear. Wilson's ideology is at war with his data. In his introduction, he repeats—there is a lot of repetition here—the notion that the growth of an urban underclass was caused by "structural" economic shifts, the globalization of muscle-labor jobs that, allegedly, inflicted deindustrialization, "downsizing" and wage stagnation upon the broad American middle class. This is a tired idea. It also has the consequence of encouraging a certain complacency about the problem of the underclass: it's not just urban blacks who are in trouble, it's all of us. "The foundation of this vision," he writes, "[is] the idea that Americans have common interests and concerns that cross racial and class boundaries—such as unemployment and job security, declining real wages, escalating medical and housing costs, the scarcity of quality child care programs, the sharp decline in the quality of public education, and the toll of crime and drug trafficking in all neighborhoods.... [T]he application of programs to combat these problems would benefit everyone, not just the truly disadvantaged."

This, of course, is the rhetorical boilerplate of latter-day social democrats: you can only take care of the poor if you buy off the middle class. The model is the western European welfare state. No matter that western Europe is stagnating under its social welfare burdens; no matter that the United States is more affluent, more competitive and more tolerant than any of the other industrial democracies. All that follows is an attempt to stuff urban solutions into the straitjacket of an outmoded political philosophy, and it is confounded at every turn by the stark reality of Wilson's data. His own empirical work shows that these poor people *are* different, sadly, from you and me. They are isolated from us; they have different values. And it seems very clear that their problems were neither entirely caused by the loss of work, nor will they be entirely solved by government action.

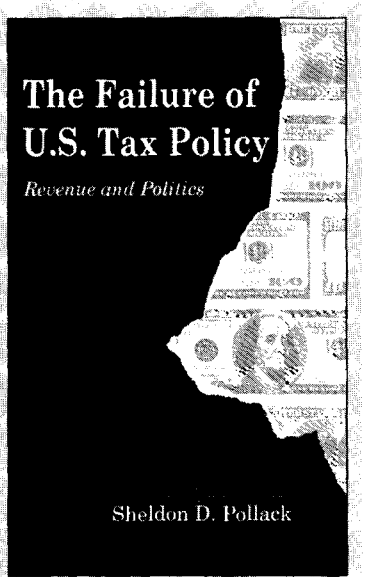
Wilson begins by describing the devastation of once-vibrant black neighborhoods in Chicago. He relies not just on statistics, but on extensive interviews with residents—on ethnographic data, in the jargon of his trade. The voices are familiar; this is territory that has been worked by Nicholas Lemann and Alex Kotlowitz, among others. But the story remains devastating, and terribly depressing, all the same. Poor but proud neighborhoods have imploded; the rudiments of civilization have vanished like cellophane on fire. One resident recalls: "[There were all kinds] of stores up and down Sixty-third Street, and it was, you know, just a fun place. Then when I came back in the seventies, it was like ... barren." In the Woodlawn neighborhood, Wilson notes that there were more than 800 local businesses in 1950, and there are about 100 today. And so he builds his case:

> The most fundamental difference between today's inner-city neighborhood and those studied by Drake and Cayton [in their classic work, *Black Metropolis*] is the much higher levels of joblessness.... A majority of adults held jobs in the three Bronzeville areas in 1950, but by 1990 only four in ten in Douglas worked in a typical week, one in three in Washington Park, and one in four in Grand Boulevard.... Neighborhoods plagued by high levels of joblessness are more likely to experience low levels of social organization.

And low levels of social organization lead to ... well, you know the rest.

But there is a serious analytical problem here, of the chicken-and-egg variety. Which came first, the loss of jobs or the social pathologies? Wilson routinely says that businesses began to leave the inner cities "in the early 1970s." Such a view suits the liberal economicist account nicely. But there is strong evidence that the pathologies began to fester well before the 1970s. Moynihan, remember, raised the flag about the disintegration of the black family in 1965, when most of the jobs whose flight Wilson laments had not yet fled.

Moynihan's famous "scissors" formulation had unemployment and "marital separation" rates tracking among nonwhites until the mid-'60s, when unemployment decreased significantly—and marital separation suddenly increased. Nathan Glazer noted a similar pattern for unemployment and welfare receipt. In New York, welfare caseloads tripled during the 1960s, a period of historically



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low unemployment, even among black males. There is strong evidence, too, that crime exploded before the jobs began to leave. In New York, robbery rates remained fairly stable through much of the twentieth century—including the Great Depression, a period of intense joblessness and despair that did not cause any normative changes among blacks or whites. But robbery quintupled from 1962 to 1967 (from 6,634 to 35,934 per year) and then doubled again from 1967 to 1972 (to 78,202). Again, those were flush, jobful times. So what was really going on?

Wilson is right, no doubt, that joblessness eventually intensified all these problems. Clearly, the despair deepened in the 1970s and 1980s; a community in which 80 percent of the children are born out of wedlock is qualitatively different from a community in which 25 percent are born out of wedlock. Robbery increased incrementally after 1972, but murder became epidemic: Wilson cites an increase in the homicide rate from eighty deaths per 100,000 teenage black males in 1984 to 180 in 1992, a result of the crack-and-weaponry culture that began to flourish. But Wilson never addresses the entirely plausible possibility that businesses began to flee the inner cities in the early 1970s—along with many of the remaining middle-class residents, black and white—as a *consequence* of higher crime, a declining pool of educated or disciplined workers and higher taxes (which were themselves caused by the increased cost of dealing with all these disasters). To entertain such an interpretation would be to admit that the phenomenon of underclass poverty is not entirely, or even predominantly, an economic phenomenon. And it would be to admit a degree of meta-economic complexity that Wilson's politics will not allow.

When Work Disappears is equally unconvincing on the back end of the economic determinist equation: the notion that the problems of the "truly disadvantaged" can be solved by more social programs and more jobs. The economic analysis does allow Wilson a near-brutal level of candor in discussing what he calls "concentration effects" and "ghetto-related behavior patterns." These, of course, are desperate euphemisms for the "culture of poverty" that Wilson considers a neoconservative slur. The candor sometimes yields surprising results. I expect that Charles Murray will be thrilled to learn that respondents to the Urban Poverty and Family Life Study—the ethnographic part of Wilson's program—report that welfare receipt is the result of a rational economic decision: it is more profitable than work.

WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Wilson cites the research of Kathryn Edin: "Once we look at single-parent families' budgets, their reason for nonwork becomes crystal clear ... it is the gap between what most unskilled or semi-skilled mothers *need* to earn and what they can *expect* to earn." This leads to an almost banal social policy impasse: Should we give poor people more money or less? Wilson argues that the way out of the trap is to provide society-wide health insurance and day-care support programs. Then the women will happily go to work. Charles Murray, of course, would respond that it is more effective simply to cut off the welfare cash. Then the women will be forced to join more economically feasible two wage-earner alliances (an arrangement formerly known as "marriage"), or be more careful about having children in the first place.

This is the argument that both Wilson and Murray want. It is the argument in which they, and their political counterparts, have indulged themselves for the past decade. And it leads nowhere. Murray's prescriptions have proven too cruel even for the most extreme conservatives to support; but Wilson teeters on equally unstable intellectual ground. His thesis keeps falling out from under him. If welfare mothers are choosing not to work, doesn't this suggest that the problem isn't merely the absence of jobs? Indeed, there is substantial evidence that the shortage of even minimally skilled workers is a far more serious economic problem than the mythical loss of jobs. These are boom times, after all, in the industrial heartland. Metropolitan areas such as Detroit, Cleveland, Omaha (where unemployment is 2.5 percent and employers are so desperate for help that they advertise on television) and, yes, even Chicago, are thriving.

As for the "mismatch" argument—the notion that the few "good" manufacturing jobs are out in the suburbs, inaccessible to urban blacks—Wilson's own research seems to indicate that the mismatch is more normative than geographical. Perhaps the saddest, most powerful section of *When Work Disappears* is Wilson's account of the Urban Poverty and Family Life Survey's extensive interviews with Chicago-area employers. These interviews indicate "that many consider inner-city workers—especially young black males—to be uneducated, unstable, uncooperative and dishonest." This is not a big surprise; but it is also not the sort of observation that is usually allowed in polite company. Wilson is admirably clear-eyed in his interpretation of the results:

> ... it would be a mistake to characterize the overall comments of the employers in

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our survey as racist, even though some clearly contain racist sentiments. Indeed, it is significant to note that of the fifteen African American employers in our survey, twelve expressed views about inner-city black workers, in response to our open-ended questions, that were coded as negative.

Wilson is also careful to note that Mexican-Americans from similar neighborhoods and income-levels are much more successful in finding and keeping jobs. He cites research by Richard Taub, a former colleague at the University of Chicago, and concludes: "black men are more hostile than Mexican men with respect to the low-paying jobs they hold, less willing to be flexible in taking assignments or tasks not considered part of their job, and less willing to work as hard for the same low wages." This, Wilson assumes, is owed to the fact that the Mexicans are recent immigrants and even "boring, dead end" jobs seem attractive to them. Extensive research on the Mexican-American community in Los Angeles by David Hayes-Bautista (not cited by Wilson, who seems to have tethered himself to Chicago data throughout) supports such an assumption: second- and third-generation Mexican-Americans are less tolerant of low-end jobs than their parents were, and they begin to exhibit many of the same anti-social patterns—particularly out-of-wedlock births and joblessness—as native-born African Americans. But isn't this proof of the insufficiency of Wilson's thesis? Don't the Mexican immigrants—and all the other immigrants, including West Indian blacks—demonstrate that there are decisive differences of belief and behavior within the same low-end labor force? And doesn't this mean that underclass poverty is more a normative problem than an economic one?

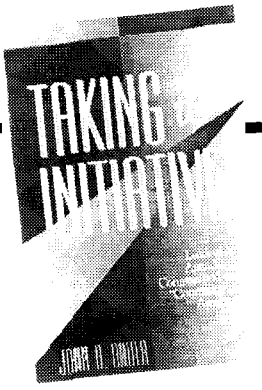
"This is a bunch of quantitative social scientists here," Christopher Jencks noted at the opening of yet another conference on urban poverty several years ago. "When we can't count something, we're not sure it exists." William Julius Wilson participated in that conference, and he suffers from the same ailment; and many of the "neoconservatives" against whom Wilson rails suffer from it as well. Neither side seems able to acknowledge a social development that changed the nature of poverty in the 1960s: the explosion of American affluence, particularly an incredibly pervasive and impatient consumer culture.

Wilson spends hundreds of pages filleting statistical minutiae about the poor without ever mentioning the single most striking domestic detail about inner-city households: the living rooms of even the poorest, most fractured single-parent families are dominated by a single piece of furniture—the color television. (And often an imposing console model.) The messages received via this piece of equipment are far more powerful than any "message" received from welfare checks. Culture is not quantifiable and it is not governmentally manageable, but it is real.

It can't be "proven" in any way, but isn't it possible that this new poverty—the chronic anarchy and dependency that began to manifest itself in the 1960s—is primarily a disease of affluence? Affluence brought options and indulgences, a blithe social adventurousness, all sorts of "alternatives." It also brought a loss of cohesion. It became possible for middle-class people not only to live more comfortably, but also to have "lifestyles." It became possible for them to afford divorce, and sport utility vehicles, and very expensive sneakers. Imagine the impact of all this, of all these images, on the very poor (to say nothing of the impact of televised violence). Adam Smith understood the phenomenon 200 years ago when he noted that "wanton and even disorderly mirth, the pursuit of pleasure to some degree of intemperance [and] the breach of chastity" did not necessarily hurt the rich, but "the vices of levity are always ruinous to the common people, and a single week's ... dissipation is often sufficient to undo a poor workman for ever."

The "vices of levity" became something of an ideology in the 1960s. I am not referring only to the counterculture; the conservative celebration of untrammeled acquisition and enterprise carried its share of responsibility for all our "wanton and disorderly mirth." Still, the great moral tragedy of post-New Deal liberalism was the tendency not only to absolve antisocial behavior, but also to memorialize it as a revolt against shallow and restrictive "bourgeois" values. There was a tacit alliance between the intelligentsia and the poor, a romanticization of alienation. Later, as the body count ballooned, this metastasized into a sloppy, undifferentiated empathy. We dare not "blame the victims" of self-indulgence.

Wilson talks about manufacturing jobs lost, but he never estimates how many of these "good" jobs were actually held by blacks. Perhaps not all that many; far more were porters and ditch-diggers and stock clerks—service jobs that became increasingly frustrating as the voluptuous festival of American excess materialized in the living rooms of



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the slums each night. Worse, jobs that had provided a measure of stability and dignity were suddenly derided as "dead end" by a remarkably irresponsible generation of urban politicians, who found it profitable to cultivate the alienation of others, who pretended that the increasingly desperate streets were a thriving "oppositional" culture, who attempted to inculcate a spectacularly misplaced pride by inaccurately referring to these slums as ghettos. A real ghetto had walls; it was, essentially, an ethnic prison. But these neighborhoods have been marked by severe population loss. Everyone, black and white, who could flee, fled.

Yes, yes, Wilson has correctly described pieces of this awfulness (as have many other writers on this subject, liberal and conservative). But there is so much that he leaves out. Some of it is missing because it doesn't fit his social-scientific method, and some of it is missing because it doesn't fit his straitened politics. In the end, Wilson's prescriptions range from the sketchy to the nonsensical. He calls for a massive jobs program, one that will provide security for middle-class workers as well as the "truly disadvantaged." He imagines the program would attract "a substantial number of displaced experienced workers willing to take lower-paying public-sector jobs until they find higher-paying work in the private sector." But, if the problem is the loss of "good" manufacturing jobs, how will a federal pick-and-shovel program solve it, especially when there already seem to be plenty of employers desperate for disciplined, unskilled workers? And, if the problem is only a jobs "mismatch," why not simply provide a more comprehensive transportation program (which Wilson does advocate) to get the mismatched workers to the available jobs?

And does Wilson really believe that desperate, irresponsible people—people whom even black employers are unwilling to hire—are suitable for work as library aides and playground assistants? "Most workers in the inner city are ready, willing, able and anxious to hold a steady job," he asserts. And that is surely true. But the "truly disadvantaged" represent the demographic sliver that is *not* ready, willing or able. Wilson's own ethnographic studies indicate that their behavior—their social and educational limitations, the psychological and cultural signals that they send prospective employers—is what keeps them out of the workforce.

Richard Taub makes a slightly wacky but intriguing suggestion that is all but ignored in *When Work Disappears*. Drawing on the romantic and somewhat far-fetched theory that native-born blacks brought north with them a skittish Southern sense of honor, a hypersensitivity to being "disrespected," and an innate comfort with ornate, strictly defined chivalric codes (common to street gangs, parochial schools and the military), Taub suggests job counseling toward careers that have such codes. He mentions long-haul trucking. Well, I don't know. But Wilson might be on firmer ground if he narrowed his jobs program to address only the dependent poor and tailored it to fit their need for structure—and community—by adding a military component. (Given the current defense reductions, there are plenty of empty barracks and underemployed drill instructors who could be put to work.)

Wilson notes in passing that black graduates of parochial schools are regarded much the same as whites or Mexicans by Chicago-area employers, but he never stops to ponder what the implications might be. Is it possible that the parochial school graduates have been given a sense of discipline and structure, the very qualities that have evaporated over the past thirty years in these blighted neighborhoods, the qualities employers are looking for? Isn't it possible that schools and charitable organizations and, yes, government programs that confer these virtues—as a paramilitary job corps might—are the sort of things we should be supporting?

Still, it would be a fantasy to believe that even a rigorous, lavishly funded jobs program would have much impact on the doom and devastation of the inner cities. The cultural forces pulling in the opposite direction are simply too powerful. It is a great irony that Wilson is, in the end, right on the main point: the "truly disadvantaged" do suffer from a more severe case of an infirmity than is afflicting the rest of society. But the problem is not the absence of jobs. It is the absence of restraint.

JOE KLEIN is a columnist for *Newsweek*.

Unlocal Hero

BY MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity by Kristen Renwick Monroe

(Princeton University Press, 292 pp., $29.95)

Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camps by Tzvetan Todorov

(Metropolitan Books, 337 pp., $27.50)

Otto Springer was an ethnic German who lived in Prague during World War II. As the Aryan head of a Jewish firm, he protected his employees while also bribing Gestapo officials and concentration camp guards, forging false documents for Jews and working in the Austrian underground. He rejected an opportunity to be transferred by his company to India, where he might have spent the war in safety. Eventually he was sent to a camp himself, but he continued to work on behalf of others. All in all, Springer saved more than one hundred Jews from imprisonment and death.

Interviewed years later in San Anselmo, California, he denied that there was anything especially virtuous about his character. His morals, he joked to Kristen Monroe, were only slightly better than those of "an average American congressman." If you want examples of altruism, he told her, you should hear about this friend of mine—and he launched into a story of a non-Jewish man who went to the camp along with his Jewish wife, although it had been a marriage arranged to protect her. So why did Springer risk his life to save others? "One thing is important," he told Monroe. "I had no choice. I never made a moral decision to rescue Jews. I just got mad. I felt I had to do it. I came across many things that demanded my compassion."

A frail grandmother with a serious heart condition and braces on her legs

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and back, Lucille was the poetry editor for her local newspaper. One day in July, while working on a manuscript, she saw a woman, a stranger, being raped outside her window. Nobody else was around at that hour of the day. The ailing woman ran downstairs, screamed and hit the rapist with her cane while he attempted to choke the victim. Lucille kept on hitting until he loosened his grip. After the victim ran away, she chased the rapist, unwilling to let him escape, and managed to close his car door on his foot. By this time help was on the scene and the rapist was arrested. In an interview with Lucille, Kristen Monroe discovered that she had a long history of such actions in the civil rights movement and in the army. Where did she get this courage? "It's really not a matter of courage," Lucille replied. "It's that you care enough about someone, about the human person, that you feel that you have to help no matter what." Does she have a personal ethical creed that guides her life? "As trite as it is, everything I do every day must always be aware of what's around me ... always be aware of the humanity around me and what is their cause and what is their need."

Among the most influential accounts of altruistic behavior in our society are those that derive from economics. In a variety of ways, those accounts attempt to explain altruism as consistent with the model of the person as a rationally self-interested actor, maximizing his or her expected utility. Altruism is thus understood as a type of quid pro quo: the altruist acts in the expectation of a return. The return is an actual benefit from the recipient, or an enhancement of reputation or prestige, or the "psychic good" of self-approval and a quiet conscience. Thi personal utility is taken to be the real goal of the altruistic act, and the act itself only an instrumental means to that goal.

Such accounts have not gone undisputed within economics itself. In an essay called "Rational Fools," Amartya Sen argued in 1976 that such accounts could not explain the behavior of many people who, out of sympathy or commitment, sacrifice their own well-being. Introducing a more complicated account of human motivation into economics, Sen maintained, would have far-reaching consequences for the nature of many economic models.

Kristen Monroe is a psychologist, and she seems unaware of Sen's work, but she has set out on her own to test the economic accounts of altruism and to challenge them. Monroe has interviewed a large number of subjects whose actions fall into distinct categories with respect to altruism. At one end are the "entrepreneurs," creative self-made people, usually in business, who "take an idea and turn it to personal profit." The entrepreneurs conform well to the economic model of choice: when they do good for others, they always mention some motive connected with their own personal interest. A more varied group are the "philanthropists," chosen by Monroe as large donors to charities of various types. (Her inevitable failure to interview anonymous donors probably skews this analysis of philanthropy in favor of rational self-interest.) The philanthropists are less calculating than the entrepreneurs, and many obviously sacrifice a great deal of their personal energy and wealth for their causes; and yet Monroe finds that explanations in terms of reputation and "psychic good" are often (though not always) adequate accounts of their behavior.

Not so with her last two groups: rescuers of the Jews selected from the list of winners of the Yad Vashem medal, the award given by the Holocaust Memorial and Research Institute in Jerusalem, and "heroes" and "heroines" selected from the list of winners of the Carnegie Hero Awards, whose winners must have risked their lives to save someone in need. Lucille is among the latter; and like most "heroes" and "heroines" who won the award, she had never heard of it before she got it. Rescuers of Jews and heroes have in common that they saved strangers, apparently just because of the strangers' need. Since the class of heroes turns out to be heterogeneous—it includes highly disinterested people and people who were conscious of their own reputations—I will focus on the rescuers.

Monroe conducted exhaustive interviews with quite a few rescuers, a sampling of which she presents to us, along with summaries of her general findings. These interviews reveal different histories, personalities and social backgrounds. The rescuers included peasants, urban workers, wealthy middle-class people, even a Silesian countess who worked as the veterinarian to a traveling circus. But there is remarkable commonality in certain significant traits. Without exception, the rescuers insist that what they did was normal and not extraordinary, that they behaved only as people ought to behave when someone in need is at hand. Without exception, they deny having agonized and calculated about the matter. Like Otto Springer, they felt that they had to do what they did. It was what there was to be done. Insofar as these people calculated the

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costs and the benefits of their altruism, the calculation concerned the "how" of the rescue operation, not the "why" or the "whether."

As for the goals of these rescuers, without exception they deny having received any material reward. (This is in any case ruled out by the arduous Yad Vashem investigation process.) They also deny being motivated by any expectation of recognition or gratitude or prestige. These denials are credible, since the rescuers operated in a society hostile to their aims, in which they knew they risked death. These people, finally, do not report feeling especially good about their actions: "Nothing special, no big deal" is a typical response.

What, then, separates these people from others? Monroe finds a recurrent distinguishing characteristic: a vivid awareness of a common humanity. Again and again, rescuers say things like "you should always be aware that every other person is basically you." And, "We live on one world. We are one people." They speak of people being "welded together," of how "everything is dependent on everything else." A Dutch rescuer named Tony says that the human race is like the cells of a single body: if one is damaged, all are damaged. Rescuers deny that this perception requires any special effort of role-playing or conscious empathy (though frequently they stress the fact that they have active imaginations, that they know how to picture life through someone else's eyes). The sense of a common humanity has become natural to them; it's just the way things are. (Several of them remarked that the Nazis succeeded in disrupting the normal order of things when they defined the Jews as outside the boundaries of common humanity, and thereby made cruelty toward the Jews seem legitimate.)

Some rescuers derived this sense of a common humanity from a religious upbringing, but Monroe finds that religion is not an independent predictor of altruism. Some owed it to a beloved parent or role model, but this factor, too, played no constantly predictive role. Some have an interest in philosophy: Otto Springer likes Kant, and Tony reports being helped by thinking that "Christ, Buddha, Gandhi, they're all the same person." But the one similar attitude in the lives of these altruists is their way of looking at people, no matter where it came from. It is this powerful consciousness of connectedness that makes them view their extraordinary actions as perfectly ordinary, "just common sense and common caring for people."

Monroe's general criticism of rational actor theory, and her defense of a wholly different theory that begins from the "perception of self," has not yet been completely worked out. Her positive theory is highly sketchy, and her concluding chapter sometimes seems imprecise and dismissive in its account of economic theories. Not so her analysis of her interview data, which gives powerful empirical support to Sen's common-sense observation. Monroe elegantly shows that altruism is not one simple thing, but many distinct things, and that the brand exemplified by the rescuers—and to some extent by the philanthropists and heroes—is not adequately captured by models based on rational self-interest.

The rescuers are a small and unusual group, but they themselves plausibly suggest that such altruism, on a smaller scale, is extremely common in the small actions of daily life. This implies that economic models are likely to have serious predictive failings. Monroe usually stresses the extraordinary character of the rescuers' achievements, but she may come closer to the truth when she says that Otto Springer's life gives just one example of "how a sensitive man lives his own life with integrity and dignity." Her data show that *homo economicus* is not "a sensitive man." We should demand accounts that do more justice to the "integrity and dignity" of which we are actually capable.

Seeing the core of ordinary morality in the extraordinary time of the Holocaust is also Tzvetan Todorov's project. Todorov is a literary and cultural thinker, and so, unlike Monroe, he does not engage in strictly empirical research; his account is based on memoirs and letters. And although he briefly mentions the rescuers, he focuses on an altogether different population: the inmates of concentration camps, Nazi and Stalinist. His idea is to use the behavior of human beings under the weight of extreme circumstances as a kind of "magnifying glass" through which to glimpse key features of human morality generally.

Unlike many accounts that stress the dehumanization of the victims and their loss of moral dignity, Todorov points out that, short of circumstances of extreme physical pain or depletion, people in the reduced circumstances of the concentration camp often behaved quite well. They retained, in large measure, three components of ordinary morality: dignity, defined as the capacity to act as a subject with a will; caring, defined as the intention to help another individual person with whom one is personally acquainted; and the life of the mind, which, as a virtue, is defined as intellectual or artistic production intended to benefit particular individuals. Todorov argues that these virtues together are exhaustive of morality and that caring—which he associates with traditionally gendered images of maternal behavior—is the primary moral virtue.

To these three genuine and ordinary virtues, Todorov opposes "heroic virtue," by which he means, apparently, doing something for an abstract cause, whether or not it helps real people. This contrast is nowhere clearly laid out. Sometimes all "courage" and "loyalty" are classified by Todorov as heroic rather than ordinary, but sometimes the "heroic" is an especially cause-oriented and abstract form of these traditional virtues. It is not at all clear whether the pursuit of justice fits into either category. Nor is it very clear what precisely is wrong with the "heroic." Todorov's central example of how it goes wrong, the Warsaw Rising of 1944, seems to have been a failure, as he himself notes, largely owing to tactical stupidity. Its leaders appear to lack moral stature not because they were fighting for a noble ideal, but because they didn't think very wisely about what they were doing and how it would affect the people involved.

Obviously this needn't be true of all noble ideals or of all the people who fight for them. We never understand just how far Todorov is ready to go in his critique of the abstract. Quite far, I suspect; but we don't really know on what grounds. We derive instead the sense of a powerful skepticism about any general pursuit of justice or goodness. It is a skepticism securely grounded in Todorov's own life, as we learn from the intermittent narratives of his childhood in Bulgaria. The experience of a state that crushed individuals while proclaiming high ideals shapes Todorov's book at every turn. Todorov's description of this experience commands the reader's respect and sympathy, but it culminates in conclusions that are nowhere justified by argument.

Todorov's experience of communist totalitarianism has left him with an abiding distrust of public and large-scale action, and with an unwillingness to see genuine virtue in any spheres but those of the home and the community. Let people encounter one another one by one, he suggests, in relationships of personal friendship and intimacy, and they will act pretty well. But let them start trying to benefit strangers, let them start pursuing universal justice, and they are bound to mess things up. Unfortunately, this larger argument remains submerged beneath data that do not exactly support it. For the evils of Nazism and Stalinism

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hardly provide an indictment of all movements dedicated to social justice and goodness. Nor do the moral successes of families and bands of friends and neighborhoods show that this sort of caring is always morally pure and reliable.

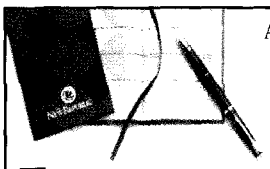
Todorov skews things by situating his "ordinary" actors in the camps—in circumstances, that is, in which they cannot act politically and in which "ordinary" actions focused on particulars are the only moral course open to them. In such situations of extremity, moreover, we are powerfully disposed to sympathize with them should they act like anything other than complete monsters. We might have arrived at a different evaluation of "caring" had Todorov focused on the good behavior of Nazis to their spouses and children (which was probably about average), or even on the moral inconstancy of most of us in our everyday lives, where we certainly "care" for some people close to us but rarely exercise the constant moral attentiveness of which Lucille spoke. Had he investigated such unextreme cases, he would have had to ask different and deeper questions. Isn't it the case that we find the Nazis evil despite their many acts of ordinary "caring," precisely because they had a warped sense of justice in their larger dealings? Don't we rightly think badly of people who behave well at home and obtusely abroad? In this sense, the experience of extremity is not at all the best lens through which to view morality generally.

The contrast between Todorov and Monroe is a provocative one. Todorov prefers actions that express care for people whom one already knows. Monroe finds the essence of altruism in the choice to help a human being as a consequence of his or her humanity, without any special tie. Together, these books raise a question that lies at the heart of a long philosophical tradition: the question of the relative moral weight of duties to humanity and duties to our own. (Our own can be a family, an ethnic group, a nation.)

Addressing Greek and Roman cultures that were very attached to local group affiliations and to a sense of honor and pride based on such attachments, Stoic philosophers insisted, much in the manner of Monroe's rescuers, that people are all part of a single world in which the well-being of all humans is interdependent. Thus, wherever they are political citizens, people also bear duties as *kosmopolitai*, or "citizens of the world." What are these duties? Above all, they involve equal respect for the worth of humanity in each and every person—a Stoic idea that exercised great power over Kant, who captured the idea of world citizenship in his doctrine of the "kingdom of ends." We are all members of a moral community that constrains our political actions by instructing us to consider humanity as an end and never as a mere means. Historically, this idea influenced (and may have itself been further influenced by) Christian ideas of our fundamental equality as children of God and Jewish ideas about duties to the stranger and the alien, as these groups interacted in the Roman world.

In practical terms, Stoics held, like Kant, that world citizenship involves duties of hospitality to aliens who reside on our soil; stringent limits on the acceptability of war and on conduct during war; duties of benevolence to relieve the sick and impoverished; duties not to despise or disadvantage any human being on account of a fortuitous characteristic such as race, ethnic or national origin, even gender; duties to promote the equal education of all human beings. Stoics were among the first thinkers in the Western tradition to urge the equal education and citizenship of women. They did not focus as intently on material need as on respect, given their complex beliefs about the ultimate insignificance of "external goods" by comparison to one's inner virtue; but a modern cosmopolitan can easily hold, again with Kant, that we have stringent duties to promote the material welfare of others as well as to respect their humanity.

The question then becomes: Are we entitled to dwell on those who are near and dear to us, rather than seeking to benefit humanity as a whole? As the cosmopolitan tradition instructs us, actions benefiting humanity may take many different forms, from political support for international human rights efforts to financial sacrifice to local actions that express solicitude for a particular person considered as human rather than merely related. As Cicero vividly showed, all these aims give rise to conflicts. When may we devote ourselves to our own family if there are many people more urgently in need of our assistance? The cosmopolitan tradition holds that frequently we are so entitled, because our family is where we are situated. It makes most sense for each of us to care for our own neighbors and children, rather than to try to benefit all the world's children equally. But all our actions should be constrained by an awareness of common humanity, which may at times impose duties that limit our pursuit of local well-being. (Thus Kant held that these duties render any project of colonial domination absolutely unacceptable.) At this



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point, members of this tradition diverge in their accounts of these levels of obligation and the conflicts they generate. Some thinkers, such as Cicero and Kant, regarded duties of benevolence as relatively elastic, permitting preference for the local; others had a more stringent sense of what distant human beings rightly claim from us.

How would our two authors respond? Todorov would answer, I think, that we must always focus on the near when we act morally. The core of morality, he insists, is contained in daily acts of caring toward people "personally known" to us; and to seek to benefit people at a distance is to risk serving a bloodless abstraction. His test for the moral content of an act is about as far from Kant's as one can be: an act is moral if one's own connection to the recipient is an essential part of its motivation. He rejects the Stoic/Kantian tradition as dangerously unrooted in the daily stuff of caring. "Humanity" is one of the abstract purposes that he lists as robbing an action of its moral content, along with "the homeland or liberty or Communism."

In a book about the French Resistance, *A French Tragedy: Scenes of Civil War, 1944* (University Press of New England), which appeared since the publication of *Facing the Extreme*, Todorov appears to embrace a more complex account of ordinary virtue. The resisters in his story of the French town Saint-Amand-Morntrond are rather like Monroe's rescuers. They see themselves as "advocates for those in need of help," without regard to personal ties. Although Todorov does not withdraw the account of virtue presented in the earlier book, or explore tensions between personal care and actions benefiting strangers, he obviously respects this attitude to strangers as an important kind of virtue, and thus moves closer to Monroe's account.

For Monroe's rescuers see things differently. They hold that morality originates in the recognition that we are all affiliated and attached, and that any human being as such demands our concern and our care. In this sense, they side with the cosmopolitan tradition. This does not mean that they prefer the distant to the local or insist on spreading their benefits evenly over all human beings: indeed, most often they responded to a claim of need that was at hand, saving these particular employees or this rape victim outside the window. But they did so because of the humanity of the person, and for no reason of personal relatedness. Moreover, they see this conduct as perfectly obvious and normal, "what everybody normally should be doing." It is simply "common sense and common caring for people," once one understands that all people are morally alike. Of course they devote an unusual measure of concern and care to their own families and friends; but they understand this concern as a local way of expressing a larger and deeper concern. When the occasion presents itself, they are ready to extend that everyday concern to the stranger. Monroe's interviews show that there is nothing bloodless or inhuman about such people. In fact, their freshness of vision makes them remarkably attractive; one could hardly ask for better companions.

Todorov, writing out of a history in which abstract purposes were used as a screen for dehumanizing brutality, has such intense skepticism about any universalistic morality that in the end he robs care of some of its moral content. For him, all universalizing is a danger, and in this respect he differs from Monroe's altruists, who locate the danger in a particular type of universalizing that ignores human need or divides human beings into hierarchically ordered groups. "Caring cannot be universal," Todorov writes, "for it implies feeling personal sympathy with the object of one's concern." Surely this begs the question. For what the rescuers display is precisely a personal sympathy that responds to human need as such, to the stranger getting raped in the street, to the unknown workers who risk deportation and death. Todorov's perspective makes sense of some of what he describes: husbands following wives to their death, mothers valiantly

Some People Like Poetry

Some people—
that means not everyone.
Not even most of them, only a few.
Not counting school, where you have to,
and poets themselves,
you might end up with something like two per thousand.

Like—
but then, you can like chicken noodle soup,
or compliments, or the color blue,
your old scarf,
your own way,
petting the dog.

Poetry—
but what is poetry anyway?
More than one rickety answer
has tumbled since that question first was raised.
But I just keep on not knowing, and I cling to that
like a redemptive handrail.

WISLAWA SZYMBORSKA

—translated, from the Polish, by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh

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protecting their children. But many of the "ordinary" acts of caring that Todorov finds in the camps do not concern long-term family relationships, and they are unintelligible without a sense of common human connectedness: the starving woman who shares the cranberries she has found in the wood with her fellow inmates; the woman who lies on top of a smaller woman whose name has just been called for the next selection and conceals her from her killers. These people knew each other in the sense that they were all imprisoned together; but they didn't choose each other for a moral relationship because they liked their looks or their personalities, or even because they were relatives. They responded to human need.

Nor does Todorov appear to admit as moral a pursuit of justice that involves a break with one's family or local group. Some of the rescuers came from anti-Semitic and even Nazi families. They chose to work against their own families, contributing ultimately, if indirectly, to the deaths of family members. Although Todorov does not discuss such conflicts, and although he values rebellion against tyranny, his account of morality seems unable to accommodate the decision to pursue justice against the interests of the near and dear. What the cosmopolitan tradition grasps is that morality must be grounded in something larger than the local, in a recognition of common needs and abilities. Todorov is wise to insist that universalism runs the risk of totalitarianism, but his own prescription for purely local foundations runs the risk of chauvinism and hierarchy, especially when we recall that our immediate surroundings always confront us with differences of race, religion, ethnicity and gender. My country right or wrong, my club, my family, my religion, my sex: these are ways of fleeing from the fact that we are all naked, hungry, mortal and dignified. And this equality exerts a moral claim, however we act on that claim concretely.

I do not wish to suggest that there is no place for the kind of long-term love and care that Todorov eloquently describes. Human beings care for one another best when they get to know one another personally. Such local loves, moreover, will raise vexing moral questions when their demands appear to conflict with those of larger loves. There will be conflict; but Todorov's perspective does not prepare us for such conflict, or help us to understand it.

Since these books focus on extraordinary circumstances, they may obscure a fact that most of Monroe's altruists stress: these extraordinary circumstances are really quite ordinary. There are always human beings who need our help, even in the absence of state-sponsored genocide. Having declared that he will use the extreme situation to understand the core of ordinary morality, Todorov concludes, oddly, that the extreme and the ordinary actually have very different requirements. It is only in extremities that the stranger demands our help: our goal "in peacetime [should be] to care about those close to us, but in times of trouble [our goal should be] to find within ourselves the strength to expand this intimate circle beyond its usual limits and recognize as our own even those whose faces we do not know."

Monroe's altruists, and Monroe herself, would respond sharply, and rightly. For a start, "peacetime" is hardly free of genocide. The fact that our nation is not at war does not make events in Bosnia and Rwanda less morally compelling. Moreover, there is a ubiquitous type of killing that does not involve death camps, but only the withholding of necessary nutrition and health care, and sometimes people are killed this way because they belong to a particular group. Economists estimate that tens of millions and perhaps hundreds of millions of women, and especially girls, have died of such endemic and quiet deprivations, from having received nutrition and health care unequal to that given males. Some nations contain (or rather, fail to contain) tens of millions of such "missing women": 44 million in China, 36 million in India. We may use the term "genocide" or we may not. Call it what you will, this is injustice of mammoth proportions, and the silence about it is furthering it.

There is misery all around us that is morally compelling even when it does not add up to millions of deaths. Tony, Monroe's Dutch rescuer, says that most people he knows avoid the need of the homeless by saying that they are all a bunch of drunks who don't want to work. But "if they spent one afternoon in downtown L.A. or even in the park in Santa Monica and looked and learned to see through their eyes, they could not give that same answer. But most people look away." Just as they did in Germany, he says, where people clung to stories that make them feel safe, to local identities and affiliations that separated them from what they saw. Without such separate identities, however, "I suddenly would have to face my own humanity."

Could people learn not to look away? Monroe concludes her interview with Tony by asking what we should do "if we would like to have more people like you

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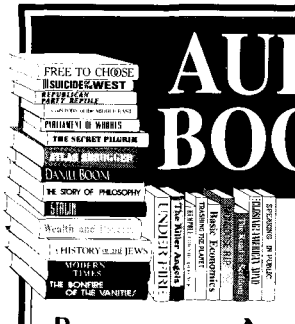
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in the world." Embarrassed by her question, Tony deflects it: "Oh, I don't know if I'm really the world's most desirable citizen. Let's not get too focused on me. We live in one world. We are one people. Working together, basically we are all the same. We can behave or we can not behave." The important thing, Tony insists, is that "we're not doomed, you know. We can at any moment in our lives decide to change things, and that requires courage, too."

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Bigus Dickus

BY PETER GREEN

Petronius: Satyrica
edited and translated by
R. Bracht Branham and Daniel Kinney

(University of California Press, 185 pp., $28)

Petronius: The Satyricon
translated with introduction and notes by
P. G. Walsh

(Oxford University Press, 212 pp., $55)

Classics professors, a pretty staid lot, are in the habit of handing out unattributed passages from ancient authors for identification and discussion. This tends to be a decorous, high-minded proceeding. But just occasionally the Muses go slumming. Here are a few passages that students are unlikely to be offered:

> After serving up these verses he befouled me [the narrator is male] with a slobbery kiss. Then he got up on my bed and in spite of my resistance forced the covers off me. He labored long and hard over my groin—in vain! The make-up caked on his face melted and streamed off in rivulets; there was so much rouge in his wrinkles you'd have thought of an old wall battered by a rainstorm.

> There are just two things that keep him from being one in a million: he's circumcised and he snores. Now I don't mind that he's cross-eyed. So's Venus. That's why he's never quiet: one eye is always on the move. I only paid three hundred for him.

> She mixed the juice of watercress with absinthe, and after soaking my genitals in it took a bunch of stinging nettles and started gently lashing my whole body from the navel down.

> He persuaded the girl to sit down on top of his [penis], and ordered Corax to get under the bed he was lying on and keep his master in motion by putting his hands on the ground and thrusting his own loins against the bottom of the bed. He obeyed the command reluctantly and the girl was skillful enough to match him, thrust for thrust. When the business was nearing a climax, Eumolpus ordered Corax in a loud voice to redouble his efforts. So old Eumolpus, sandwiched between his valet and his mistress, was riding a kind of seesaw.

Add to this that the probable author of these passages, ordered to commit suicide by the most notorious of the Julio-Claudian emperors, not only turned his wrist-cutting into a last hurrah of a party, but also included in his will a detailed list of the emperor's deviant bisexual activities, with the names of all partners thoughtfully provided. The author's name was Petronius, and his book is commonly known as the *Satyricon*. When we recall that Cicero, for one, was as prissy as Henry James over the least suggestion of impropriety (he even banned busts of Maenads from his library), it is clear that we are dealing here with something out of the ordinary.

No text from antiquity is as full of puzzles and ambiguities as Petronius's truncated masterpiece. Even its exact title (as these two new translations demonstrate) remains in doubt. Is it *Satyricon*, a genitive plural, with *libri*—books—understood, and can we translate this (Walsh's version) as "A recital of lecherous happenings"? Or is it a neuter plural, *Satyrica*, with a whole bundle of meanings (Branham and Kinney, who invoke the dread name of Bakhtin, are nothing if not all-inclusive), of which the simplest is "a heuristic metaphor for the moral ambiance [sic] of the fictional world Petronius has created"? Was the author's first name Gaius (as Tacitus says) or Titus (as Plutarch and Pliny say), and in either case was he identical with Nero's Arbiter of Elegance? And was this figure the T. Petronius Niger who was consul in July-August of AD 62?

And how big a work are we dealing with? According to the manuscript tradition and the scholia, the main surviving episodes come only from Books XIV-XVI of the whole. The thought of Encolpius, Ascyltus and Giton romping round southern Italy for a thousand pages or so may be daunting (to some, even emetic), but it would be hard to argue that their scabrously inventive creator couldn't have lasted that long. If true, the complete work will have been almost on the scale of *War and Peace*. Impossible, say some scholars: there are no parallels. But then just about everything to do with this baffling text is unique. The lack of parallels may well be due to the fragmented *Satyricon* having come into our possession not by the usual route—that is, by a kind of educational consensus which ensured transmission via the regular copying of manuscripts—but by chance and by private adult whim: through the back door, as it were.

Not that it lacked popularity for the first six or seven centuries of our era. Sidonius Apollonius quoted from it, and so did Boethius and Isidore of Seville. What's more, the citations came from lost sections of the novel, and Walsh is probably right in his speculation that "for many centuries fuller versions circulated widely in Italy and Africa, Gaul and Spain." Long before the Renaissance, however, the complete narrative had ceased to exist. The sole unbroken episode of any length still extant is the justly famous *Cena Trimalchionis*, or *Trimalchio's Dinner Party*, and no medieval teacher was going to recommend *that* to his students. No accident, then, that the *Cena* only survived by the skin of its teeth in a single manuscript, written in 1423 and transcribed by Poggio Bracciolini, but lost for another two centuries, despite being the perfect anthology piece. Other manuscripts contain somewhat shorter selections, made seemingly at random without any indication of context. Three manuscripts from the ninth and twelfth centuries offer a range of even briefer passages. Lastly, there are what the late John Sullivan referred to, tongue in cheek, as "edifying snippets" (the nature of the edification

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is a matter for debate), culled from quotations made by metricians, grammarians and moralists, including Fulgentius and John of Salisbury.

No ancient writer provides us with an overall synopsis of the plot of the book, and out of this remarkable mish-mash modern scholars have long labored to extract a coherent narrative. Their efforts have been complicated even further by the fact that Petronius's prose was interlarded with frequent outbreaks of verse, in the genre known as Menippean satire. What Walsh calls "Fragments, Testimonies, Poems," and Branham and Kinney call "Testimonia, Fragments, Poems and Attributions," both printed as appendices, mostly consist (to be brutally plain) of those bits that have defeated five centuries of scholarly effort to "place" them in a theoretical reconstruction, or are generally dismissed as spurious. Not only are some of these highly tantalizing, not only do they have no clear relevance to known episodes, but they also stimulate highly varied interpretations. One nice example: Fulgentius cites Petronius for the meaning of the rare word *aumatium*: *In aumatium memet ipsum conieci.* Walsh translates: "I launched myself into a hidden corner." Huh? Branham and Kinney prefer something far more Petronian (and probably right): "I hurled myself into the privy."

On top of all our other problems, then, we have to deal with the arbitrary arrangement of bits and pieces to create some semblance of a narrative sequence. As a result, if you sit down to read the *Satyricon* as a novel, the Trimalchio episode is the only one which you can get through without constant stop-and-start dislocation, a frustrating series of lurches from one incomplete scene to another. (This unfortunate accident was the one quality of the text that was faithfully transferred to the screen by Fellini.) We are not even certain where the action as we have it begins. Cumae and Puteoli both have their adherents; somewhere near Baiae and Capua, then. For quite a few chapters Encolpius and his friends are at sea, physically as well as metaphorically. They end up in Croton, a town seemingly restricted to fortune-hunters and their victims. Some of the fragments find them in Marseilles, and heaven knows what kind of a bouillabaisse they were involved in there. This might not matter if there was a strongly articulated plot; but Petronius has about as much plot as Kerouac. The narrative, in fact, reminds me irresistibly of London literary parties in the '50s, consisting to a great extent of fashionable book-talk interspersed with

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"By standing firm on his campaign promises and not yielding to pressure from any source, Netanyahu will bring peace with security, *shalom batuach,* to Israel and to its area of the Middle East."

The Golan. Before Israel wrested it from Syria, the Golan was a desolate plateau. The Israelis have created cities on the Heights, and a vibrant industry and agriculture. The Syrians, whose historical claim to the Golan is dubious, are obsessed with it and have vowed not to make peace with Israel unless it is turned back to them in its entirety. But the Golan, would not be more than 1% of Syria's territory, and could be of only one use to it: as a staging ground for a break-through attack on Israel. For Israel, the Golan is an irreplaceable strategic asset. It is also the source of 30% of its fresh water. Such crucial assets should not be bartered for vague and empty promises.

A Palestinian State. Israel could not survive if Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") were in unfriendly hands. And especially in light of the experience since the "handshake" during which time more Israelis were killed by Palestinian terrorists than in any comparable previous period, there can be little question of the enduring hostility of the Arabs. The "West Bank" mountain ridges dominate the narrow waist of Israel, in which over 70% of the Jewish population, 80% of its industrial base, and the most important military installations are located. The Palestinians would not need an army to make life in Israel impossible. Moveable Katyusha rockets would dominate the area. And why should the Palestinians be allowed to carve a state off Israel's back? There are countless minorities all over the world who would be deeply grateful to have even a fraction of the autonomy that Israel is already granting its Arab minority and which it is prepared to expand even further. Israel needs to keep strategic control of the "West Bank", without which it would not be defensible.

Jerusalem. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, claims to Jerusalem being a Moslem holy city or the capital of any Arab country were rarely, if ever, asserted. The Moslems have designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount as their holy site. The Israeli government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Moslem sensitivities, has largely acceded to this and has put the area under Moslem control. For over two thousand years, Jews have been living in Jerusalem and they have been the majority population since the 19th century. Why should they give up their capital, their holy city as far back as memory goes—or even any part of it? The Moslems have their holy cities, Mecca and Medina, and they have 22 Arab capitals. There are important cities in the "West Bank". But Jerusalem is the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish State.

These are the most important issues that Netanyahu will address. As to Jewish "settlements", in the "West Bank". Netanyahu has made clear that Jews have the right to live in any part of the land of Israel, all of the land west of the Jordan River. And why not? How is it possible that 160,000 Jews living among 1 million Arabs in the "West Bank" should be an obstacle to peace if over 1 million Arabs live within the "green line" of Israel? They don't have to fear for their lives and nobody considers them an obstacle to peace. By standing firm on his campaign promises and not yielding to pressure form any source, Netanyahu will bring peace with security, *shalom batuach,* to Israel and to its area of the Middle East.

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bouts of rather miserable sex.

The sex, of course, is what everyone associates with the *Satyricon*, and what left a cloud of furtive prurience hanging about it. It was the kind of book that old gentlemen in flowered waistcoats were thought to study in privately printed translations: no accident that the most widespread Victorian version, by our old friend Anonymous, was ascribed, falsely, to Oscar Wilde, and printed under his known pseudonym of Sebastian Melmoth. And the prurience took a long time to disperse. One of the most enjoyable things in Branham and Kinney's volume is a section entitled "Petronius and his Critics": not since Fleet Street quizzed the puritanical Dr. Leavis about the juicier bits of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* have I enjoyed such beating about the bush (a fair enough metaphor in the circumstances) concerning putative obscenities.

The trials of *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* saw expert witnesses tying themselves in knots to maintain that great literature was uplifting, whatever its subject. Petronius and Orwell (in his essay on Salvador Dalí) knew better. So (to do him justice) did Leavis. Only now have we come far enough to savor the bad logic, as well as the hypocrisy, of this attitude. Ben Jonson, Burton, Dryden and Coleridge, all steeped in the classics, praised Petronius for his good Latin: yet in fact his language ran the gamut from literary frou-frou to the kind of gutter jargon found on Pompeian graffiti. Montaigne, with elegant euphemism, claimed that Petronius "renounced not the Man in favor of the Magistrate." Robert Louis Stevenson called the *Satyricon* "a rum work, not so immoral as most modern works, but singularly silly." Huysmans, of course, liked Petronius; Wilde blathered on predictably about his pursuing a scheme of life that would "find in the spiritualizing of the senses its highest realization." D.H. Lawrence (of all people) decided he was "straight and above-board," and didn't "try to degrade and dirty the pure mind in him." It was left for Lytton Strachey (of all people) to snarl about "the literature of the future ... when books will pour out from the press reeking with all the filth of Petronius." The moral judgment apart, that was a spot-on prediction.

Indeed, the real joke is that sexual freedom of speech has now got to a point where the fun and games of the *Satyricon*—including homosexual rape; anal dildoes spruced up with oil, pepper and crushed nettle seeds; incestuous voyeurism, heterosexual cornholing and energetic pederasty—hardly seem to justify all the fuss made about them. It is also a staple of scholarly exegesis that the unifying leitmotif is the impotence with which Encolpius (a well-endowed stud whose name means "Crotch") has been stricken by the ithyphallic garden god Priapus for some unidentified offense. Yet the first we hear of this is toward the very end of the text as we have it. Earlier on, Priapus's priestess Quartilla seems quite happy (whatever the "holy rite" was that our three adventurers "disrupted in front of the grotto") to invite the trio to a brisk pansexual gangbang.

Literary critics are also taken by the fact that the temptress for whom Encolpius fails to rise to the occasion is called Circe, while he (for no good reason) is now calling himself Polyaenus ("The Much Fabled One" or "The Man of Many Stories"). Presto, the *Satyricon* becomes an elaborate spoof of the *Odyssey*, with the wrath of Priapus replacing the wrath of Poseidon, and Encolpius standing in for Odysseus himself (who was addressed as "Polyaenus" by the Sirens). So, a complete text of twenty-four books?

All this enjoyable scholarly speculation doesn't get us much further in solving the primarily social conundrum posed by the *Satyricon*. More to the point, I think, is to figure out motive-through-author-and-audience for a narrative that slams fashionable rhetoric and literature in an oddly conservative way; that revels in low life, in titillating sexual adventures, in back-street intrigue; that gives almost everyone Greek names, as well as parodying Greek popular romances; and, perhaps most important, that displays a coolly amused and aristocratic contempt for the antics of the fly-by-nights and *nouveaux riches* whose world it dissects with such lethal perceptiveness. Petronius takes Trimalchio's cash-based pretensions apart with the same kind of unthinking superiority shown by George and Weedon Grossmith while mocking the suburban Pooters in *The Diary of a Nobody*, or Theseus of Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as he launches his patronizing commentary on the "rude mechanicals" and their efforts to entertain him.

It is this attitude that gives most support to the tradition presenting Nero's Arbiter of Elegance, the ex-consul who turned night into day, a man (Tacitus reports) "learned in luxury," as the author of the *Satyricon*. Author and style are indeed well matched. More interesting, it was Nero who founded an after-dinner literary circle (Tacitus again) at which budding writers would read from work in progress or offer impromptu declamations. At least two future Emperors, Nerva and Vitellius, were members: Nero hailed the first as a new Tibullus. It is not hard to picture the well-read Petronius making a hit in this circle with installments of a picaresque novel that related, much like *The Pickwick Papers*, a whole series of loosely related louche adventures linked only by their participants, and went Dickens one better by spicing the dish with highly flavored erotica. Nero himself was notorious for his own nocturnal adventures; but no one could identify the Emperor with these lower-class rascals of dubious ethnicity and social status.

Or could they? As Walsh emphasizes, the millionaire ex-slave Trimalchio, as rounded and brilliant a figure as Falstaff, has a surprising number of characteristics in common with Nero: the gold bracelet on his right arm, the habit of wearing a napkin tucked round his neck at meals, the preservation of his first shaved beard in a gold casket, the slave named Carpus, the mildly absurd literary pretensions. This was playing with fire with a vengeance, and it was not helped by Petronius's dangerous habit (recorded by Plutarch, who—as Branham and Kinney point out—"had little experience of megalomaniacal emperors") of twitting Nero for the exact opposite of his real faults, in this case stingy meanness. In fact, the Arbiter of Elegance had a stunning vulgarian as patron, and he was tempted into some highly risky ambiguities as a result. As Horace said, "Change the name and the story's about you." Not that Petronius could resist saddling Trimalchio with the habits of earlier emperors as well: it was Claudius who toyed with an edict allowing guests to belch and to fart at the dinner table, and Augustus himself who set a fashion for chintzy dinner-gifts with punning labels attached.

Perhaps the scariest element about the *Satyricon*, something it shares with a great deal of post-Augustan literature, is the glimpse that it provides of the fixed social hierarchy in terms of which the satire operates. This is a world of patrons and clients, of rentiers and legacy-hunters: the ideal is *otium*, leisure, a term that has become as debased as the client-patron relationship. Though the Roman *haut monde* may sneer at a parvenu like Trimalchio, it is no less dependent on wealth. Blue blood and cash join in an unholy alliance. What no one in society—from the lowest adventurer like Encolpius to the highest aristocrat—contemplates for a moment is the idea of working for a living. Neither Petronius nor Juvenal in the generation

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after him has anything but contempt for (in Gilbert Highet's words) "the shrewd, energetic, competent men who made harbors, highways, aqueducts, drainage-systems, and baths; who cleared the forests and set up the trade-routes; who exchanged the products of the far parts of the globe and ventured on innumerable dangerous voyages." Trimalchio was one of these men.

But once Trimalchio has made his pile, his only ambition is to exist in an atmosphere of luxury and glut, to live what he fondly supposes to be the life of a gentleman. His hard work notwithstanding, this is his goal, his ideal. I must confess that I have always felt considerable sympathy for Trimalchio's buddy Hermeros, who lays into Ascyltus and Giton over the dinner table as sneering and feckless freeloaders mocking better men than themselves. Petronius, whose approach is ambivalent enough to see both sides of this picture, never gives a hint that the system could or should be changed. As a philosophical Sceptic, he pens verses on the deceptiveness of dreams and the senses. Like Epicurus, he thinks that fear created gods. He would like the denizens of his world to be nicer people, with more refinement; he certainly would prefer it if they had elegant manners, impeccable taste in literature, and a firm resolve not to bore their social betters; but patrons and clients, slaves and masters, the realities of social rank, were there forever.

Most modern readers of the *Satyricon* probably come closer to the Petronian view than they know. *Trimalchio's Dinner Party* is set up in such a way that it is almost impossible not to laugh at Trimalchio rather than with him, and more often than not on the basis of superior knowledge, as when he regales his guests with splendidly jumbled mythology. One is imperceptibly drawn into complicity with the author. The trouble is, Petronius is so infernally readable, and his *olla podrida* of conmanship, bitchy lit. crit., absurd gastronomy, bed-bouncing, murder and anecdotes (werewolves, susceptible widows) is so enticing that we tend to forget the horrendous social implications of what we're reading. (Giton alone, toy-boy supreme to both sexes, is enough to make any Welfare Officer blanch.) No wonder the *Satyricon* is constantly cited by self-styled humanists who like to equate morality with bad manners and dismiss both as hopelessly lower-middle-class. It's also hard to think of a work—and this would really have infuriated Petronius—that's done more to reinforce the movie-view of ancient Rome (not only De Mille's, but also Fellini's) as a hotbed of orgies and banquets: dancing-girls on the floor, dormice in honey as appetizers.

This, I fear, is one strong, and eminently Roman, reason for the steady trade in translations of the *Satyricon*: there's money in it. But considering the standard of recent versions, we have good cause to be thankful. Petronius needs the best. I can't imagine a more fiendishly difficult work to turn into adequate English. The Latin is by turns rococo and vernacular to the point of slanginess; the text is frequently corrupt, and even when not corrupt, full of hopeless obscurities. The author's bookishness delights in parody of, and allusions to, works for the most part lost. In sum, a task to daunt even the bravest and most resourceful translator's heart.

A generation ago, two excellent scholars, John Sullivan and William Arrowsmith, one English, the other American, both widely read in comparative literature, produced versions still very much in print, which by general consent have hitherto proved the most successful at surmounting all the *Satyricon*'s myriad difficulties. And now, by an odd coincidence, we once again have two new translations, one English (Walsh), the other American (Branham and Kinney); and it's inevitable that we should ask ourselves how well they stack up against their predecessors.

Translations, like wine, go off after a certain age, mostly due to changes in social and literary fashion. Thirty years is a decent lifespan, and so we are probably due for a change. There is also the obvious advantage of these competing translations having absorbed over three decades of vigorous Petronian scholarship: they are clearer, sharper and solve more of the vexing problems, textual and interpretative, than Sullivan and Arrowsmith. Walsh, Branham and Kinney also maintain the tradition by being first-rate scholars. There is little to criticize, and a great deal to praise, in their careful and detailed exegesis of difficult material. Branham and Kinney point, correctly, in previous versions to "the shortage of notes where the lay reader needs them most," and have made good the omission in exemplary fashion; so, too, has Walsh. Where Walsh's emphasis is factual and historicist, Branham and Kinney prefer to go the literary and narratological route. I find myself consulting both in about equal proportions; if one doesn't have the answer to my queries, the other will.

This confident expertise tends to dissipate in the actual business of translation. America and England are still Shaw's two great nations divided by a single language, and in a text so dependent on vernacular topicality, what will suspend disbelief on one side of the Atlantic can still arouse bafflement or irritation on the other. Herewith a short comparative sample of both translations, tackling the same verses:

> ... Come now with pliant thighs,
> And mincing buttocks, fingers gesturing!
> Come, tender youths, and you in later life,
> And lads castrated by the Delian's knife!

> ... Giddyup! Try to follow!
> All you ace organ-grinders, dude-buggies,
> glad-handers old and fey, caponized by
> Apollo!

No prizes for guessing who wrote which version.

Though we no longer need to bother about bowdlerization, there remain intractable difficulties caused by alien fashions, unfamiliar topical names and situations, and literary or linguistic oddities for which no modern parallels exist. By patching together loose equivalents from contemporary life and letters, the translator simply buys himself a few years of viability, and even so remains misleading. Branham and Kinney are taking a broad swipe at Sullivan and Arrowsmith when they argue that "the novelized comedy of styles that Petronius sets up involves far more respect for specific inflections than we find in the stock para-Poundian rant of the long poems in recent English renderings;" but their own all-too-characteristic preference, in the literary-academic world of the 1990s, for pastiching these mini-epics in the stopped heroic rhyming couplets of Pope or Dryden makes it pretty clear that their version will go out of date as quickly as any other. It's a good deal livelier than Walsh's, which comes over as respectably donnish even in its spicier moments; but the note of thanks to the authors' students "for keeping us in touch with the current vernacular" is a dead giveaway. Petronius is outrageously, wittily, scabrously *sui generis*, and our flaccid contemporary *argot* pales beside his vivid, ultra-literate Roman blend of mandarin and vernacular. Reading the *Satyricon* brings back for me the sights, sounds, smells, the very texture, of every South Italian town I've ever known. Come to think of it, most of them had an Encolpius, an Ascyltus and quite a few Gitons. If to be a classic is to transcend your own age, then, in its scandalous way, the *Satyricon* more than qualifies.

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JERUSALEM DIARIST

House of cards

I RESTED MY COFFEE CUP ON A cardboard box, glanced out the patio door of my unfinished apartment at paint cans, and listened to the quiet. For yet another day, the Arabs hired to work on our new home had stayed away, afraid to cross the supposedly undivided city of Jerusalem into a Jewish neighborhood. I reached our contractor, Yitzhak, on his cell phone; he grunted tiredly. "I haven't slept all night," he said. If the negotiations launched in Washington fail, "they'll send us all back into Gaza," he said. I put the phone down. So much for my attempt at a private life insulated from politics. I had moved my family into our half-completed apartment but wasn't able to unpack because the carpenter couldn't build our cabinets—his Arab apprentice had been killed in the latest fighting on the Temple Mount.

WE'D SIGNED THE CONTRACT AT the end of May, the day after Benjamin Netanyahu won the election. Yitzhak would gut the tiny flat my wife bought while she was still single, rebuild it and add two rooms. The kids would have space to do their homework; on spring nights we could have friends over for fondue on the new patio. After ten years of marriage we would join the middle class. Yitzhak, still in his 20s, muscular and ponytailed, belonged to the upper tier of contractors—those willing to sign on a completion date. He'd given up employing West Bank Palestinians, regularly locked out of Israel for months following terror attacks. Instead, he hired Arab East Jerusalemites, who are officially residents of Israel, and even some Jewish craftsmen. They charged more, and he passed on the cost to us.

THE MORNING WE SIGNED, MY WIFE got cold feet. "We'll spend every cent we have. Then Bibi'll start a war," she said, "and we'll have to leave." I insisted we go ahead. I was nervous about Netanyahu, too—his ideology and his inexperience—but refused to consider leaving the country over election results. I'd stay hopeful by building a house in Jerusalem. After a year saturated with history—Rabin's assassination, the West Bank pullback, suicide bombings, the election—and (in a two-journalist family) with work, we'd just live here, like people do in other countries. It would be therapeutic. At four in the afternoon, we signed.

WE MOVED TO A RENTED PLACE—A crumbling house built in the early '20s, one of the few in the area that survived the 1929 Arab riots. It stood at the ridge where the border once ran through Jerusalem, with a view of Sur Bahir, an Arab village Israel annexed to the city in 1967. Our belongings stayed mostly in cartons. The children battled over the few toys we'd unpacked. I lost hours pawing through boxes for kids' clothes and files on politicians for stories. Not that I wrote much. I had to shop for bathroom fixtures, hand-painted Armenian tiles for the kitchen, bricks for the patio. We'd joined the new, bourgeois Israel, the one I'd disdained, where couples get together for Saturday lunch and compare tips on towel racks. I would drop by the building site to watch Yitzhak's foreman, Walid, and his quiet mustached, chain-smoking helpers. One afternoon Yitzhak drove us to building-supply stores and mentioned that he did his reserve duty in a half-mythical commando unit.

ACROSS TOWN AT THE PRIME MINister's Office, Bibi Netanyahu also seemed to be living in temporary quarters, unable to get unpacked and working. His ministers squabbled over portfolios. His bureau chief, Pinhas Fishler—the crucial gofer responsible for the prime minister's schedule—quit after the press revealed that his ex-wife and various women friends had filed police complaints against him for threats he'd made. Fishler's office stayed empty. *Nekudah*, a West Bank settler journal, quoted a Netanyahu confidant as saying that the prime minister's bureau suffered "waiting disease," with key projects left in limbo. The peace process—redeployment in Hebron, the further pullback of Israeli forces throughout the West Bank scheduled for August, final-status talks—also remained in cardboard cartons. Here and there, newspapers reported that Palestinian frustration was growing, waiting for a spark.

WE MOVED IN BEFORE THE LONG Yom Kippur weekend. Yitzhak said he had a week's more work to do, but that we could camp out in the new apartment while he finished. The Old City ceremony opening the Hasmonean tunnel was held a few hours after the end of the Yom Kippur fast. Netanyahu, it later emerged, had made the decision to open the tunnel at a meeting that included the head of the Shin Bet security service—but not the army chief of staff, the head of army intelligence or any other brass responsible for assessing Palestinian reactions. The 2,000-year-old drainage ditch hardly deserved the significance heaped on it by either Netanyahu or the Palestinians. But the perception of a Jewish threat to the mosques of the Temple Mount allowed faith to amplify Palestinian anger. Within three days, Palestinian police and Israeli soldiers were shooting at each other.

I CALLED YITZHAK FROM MY OFfice. "The men ran away," he told me. They were afraid of being alone in a Jewish neighborhood during a war. When I got home, I found an abandoned brush, stiff and sticky with paint. When I told a neighbor, he said, "I like that. After all, I can't be in an Arab part of town without being afraid." Without realizing it, he was celebrating the fact that the city, whose unification remains an article of Israeli faith, is more divided than ever before.

ON FRIDAY, YITZHAK CAME ALONE to hang towel racks. He couldn't stay long; he had emergency orders to report to his reserve unit. Finishing my house was no longer his top concern, but he promised the carpenter would come soon to build the cabinets. That day, at the Temple Mount, cops and Muslim worshipers clashed after prayers. The police said they didn't use live fire; three men somehow died, apparently of gunshot wounds.

NETANYAHU FLEW TO WASHINGton. His staffers forgot to invite Dan Shomron, chief negotiator with the Palestinians. From the air force jet, they called and asked him to catch the next commercial flight. I rang Yitzhak to see if the carpenter had come. "His apprentice got killed," he said, breathless, unnerved. "The Temple Mount. Don't know how. They worked together years." Yitzhak's own workers still wouldn't come. "Even in East Jerusalem there are checkpoints. That means a kick here, a slap there."

AFTER TALKING TO YITZHAK, THE cabinets still not complete, I searched boxes for the children's winter clothes. I have no right to complain. Yitzhak says the carpenter's apprentice was due to get married next week; he'd just finished building the furniture for his own house. But that was his private life.

GERSHOM GORENBERG

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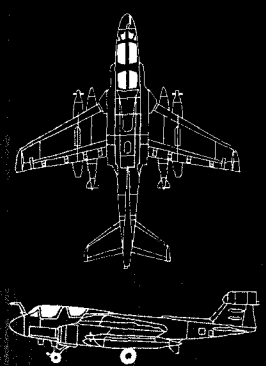

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